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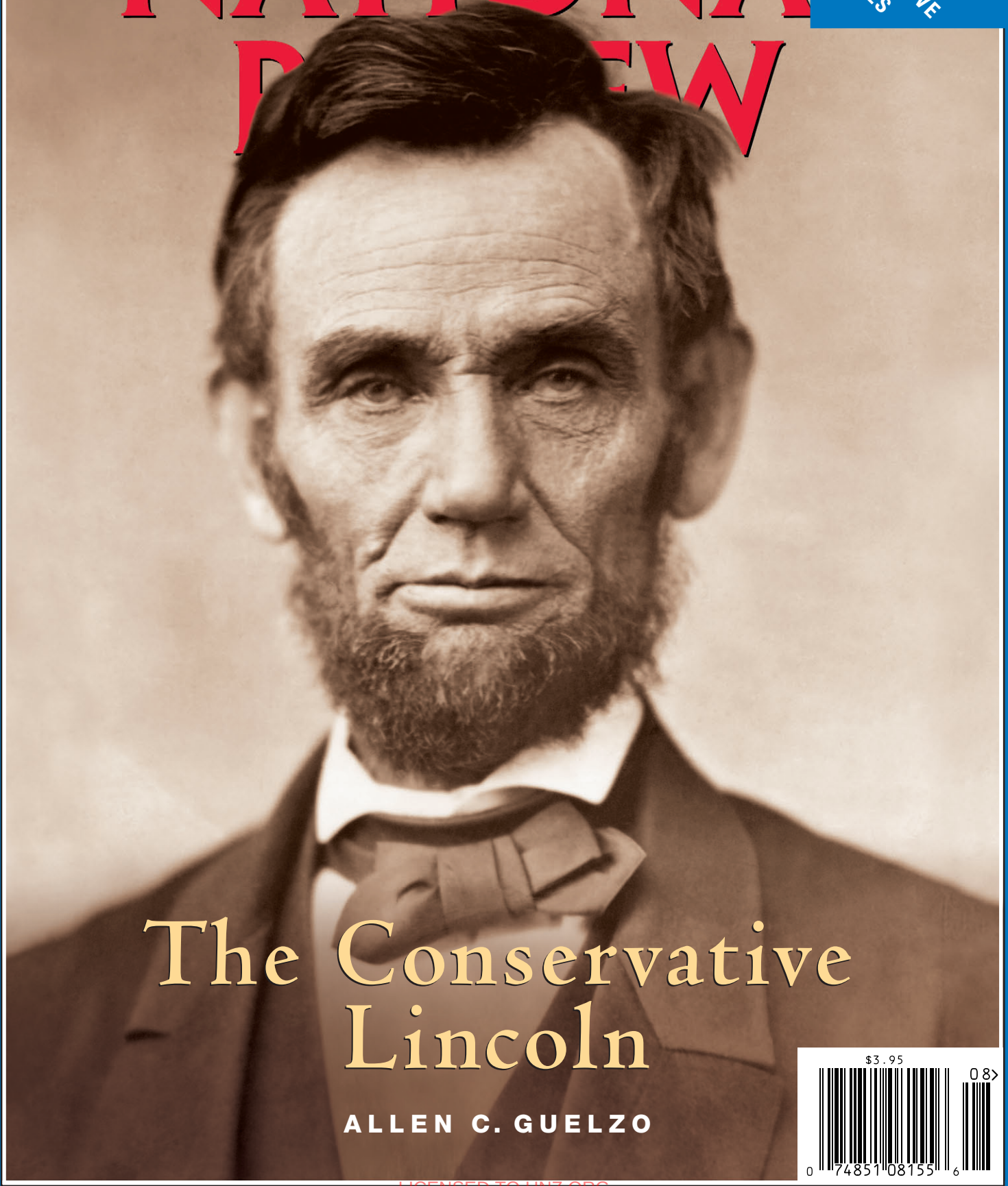
RICHARD NADLER: A Dissent on Immigration

NATIONAL REVIEW

25 CONSERVATIVE MOVIES



The Conservative Lincoln

ALLEN C. GUELZO

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The free market's trial by fire

The coming year will shape the world's view of competition, privatization, and free trade.

The extent of the financial crisis has yet to be revealed, but even a couple of years of declines in GDP and relatively high unemployment will not overshadow the remarkable economic achievements of the past four decades. Remember, the crisis that kills capitalism has been said to loom during every major recession and financial crisis since Karl Marx prophesied capitalism's doom.

However, though I am confident that sizable world economic growth will resume before very long under a mainly capitalist world economy, a prolonged and deep worldwide depression could cause a retreat from capitalism and globalization. There could be high tariffs, trade barriers, nationalization of weak companies, and wage and price controls—all unattractive prospects. Ultimately, middle-class and poor families would be hurt the most by unwise government policies, attacks on the foundations of a competitive economy, and policies that frighten entrepreneurs and discourage investors.

—Gary S. Becker

Rebuilding the Republican brand

What does the GOP need more: a new standard-bearer or new standards?

How confusing was the Republican presidential pitch? Throughout his ultimately failed campaign, candidate John McCain said his political idols were Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan. One of them raised the tax rate to 90 percent, and the other lowered it to 28 percent. That's like a Democrat saying he simultaneously worships at the temples of Jesse Jackson and Scoop Jackson. The "party of ideas" was clearly losing its way.

The maneuvering for leadership this spring will be a window into the party's soul. Conservatives will argue that the GOP needs to return to its traditional roots on matters like illegal immigration; moderates who tend to avoid such wedge issues will stress outreach and expanding the loyal Republican base. As they regroup, all sides can take heart by recalling that political parties, like economies, are cyclical. They rise and fall—and, if they're smart, learn to adapt to the changing times.

—Bill Whalen

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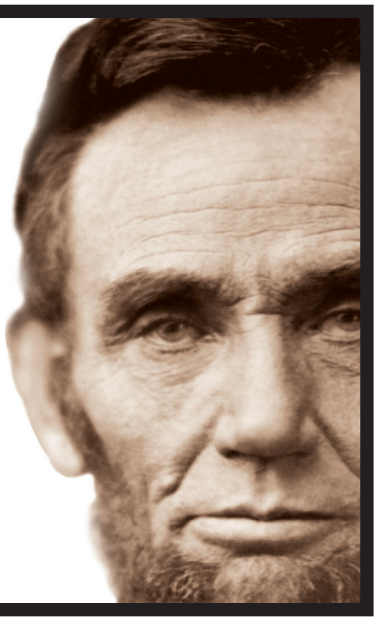
Our Lincoln

If Abraham Lincoln's bicentennial laurels are not being plucked from conservative trees, this is not through any fault of Lincoln's. From his earliest political stirrings in the 1830s, Lincoln was a torchbearer for free markets, individual liberty and economic mobility, the rule of law, natural rights, and prudence in governing. *Allen C. Guelzo*



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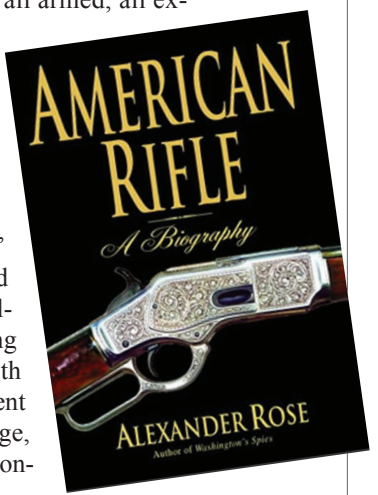
Letters

Pennsylvania-Kentucky Longrifles

I'd like, if I may, to correct some misperceptions about what I do and do not argue in my book *American Rifle: A Biography*—reviewed in the December 15 NR ("Politics in the Round") and subsequently the subject of a letter to the editor ("Loaded History," January 26)—that seem to have crept into the discussion.

First, letter-writer Charles Knapp is correct to say that the major battles of the Revolution were fought along "European" lines (that is, by Continental soldiers conventionally trained to advance in straight lines with bayonets fixed), not by riflemen using what might today be called the guerrilla tactics of hit-and-run, ambush, and sharpshooting—a distinctively "American" form of fighting borrowed from eastern-woodland Indians.

But he is incorrect to imply that I dispute this general truth. I spend a good deal of time highlighting the differences between the two styles, the circumstances in which combat occurred, and the bitter divisions within the American officer corps and political leadership over the issue. Red-hot radicals like Charles Lee disparaged the hidebound "Hyde Park" tactics and "puerile reviews" sacred to the British army, and called instead for an "active vigorous yeomanry, fired with noble ardour . . . all armed, all expert in the use of arms." More conservatively (or Britishly) minded officers, like Alexander Hamilton and Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne, were adamant that, in the former's words, "the nearer the soldiers approach to machines perhaps the better."



Perhaps most important, however, is my insistence that while backwoods riflemen did not "win" the War of Independence, their frontier-derived characteristics of independent-mindedness, coolness under fire, self-discipline, constant shooting practice, and insistence on hitting their marks with a single shot profoundly influenced the subsequent evolution of American military doctrine, self-image, and worldview. One can hear echoes of the same controversies today in Iraq.

The other issue Knapp raises—the origins of the famous name "Kentucky rifle"—is an interesting etymological question. Knapp claims that "Kentucky rifle" was a term used only after the early 19th century; before that, it was called a "Pennsylvania rifle."

These innately American arms were certainly called Kentuckies after Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans, but they were informally known by that name in the 18th century, despite their origins in Pennsylvania. "Kentucky" at the time was shorthand for "wilderness," which is where these weapons were used.

Truth to tell, the most precise way of describing them would be "Pennsylvania-Kentucky longrifles," but for the sake of readers, I compressed the phrase to "Kentucky rifle" throughout the book.

I hope that clears up any confusion. If readers have any questions or comments about the book, they may contact me through my website.

Alexander Rose
www.alexrose.com

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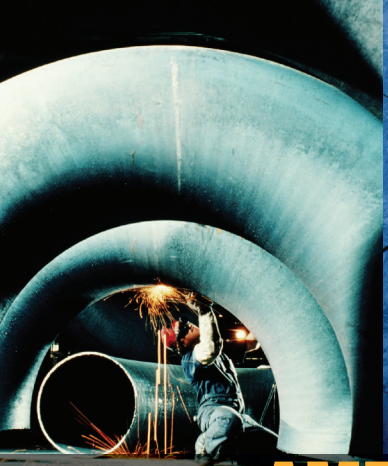

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The Week

■ We liked limousine liberals better when they paid for their own cars.

■ Former senator Tom Daschle, who withdrew his nomination to serve as secretary of health and human services, faced three problems. First, he violated the standards of the man who nominated him. President Hope and Change promised to chase lobbyists from the temple, but Daschle has earned millions lobbying since he lost his Senate seat in 2004, a quarter million of that in fees from the health-care industry that he had been asked to regulate. Second, he was a tax cheat. Daschle got another $250,000 worth of service between 2005 and 2007 from a car and driver provided by a big Democratic contributor, none of which he declared on his tax returns. Third, he was a weasel. Daschle asked his accountant about his car and driver in June 2008—just the moment when Barack Obama wrapped up the nomination and Daschle began sniffing for a job. High office: the Democrats' incentive for tax compliance. The Senate overlooked Timothy Geithner's tax troubles because the times required the right man at Treasury. The Left requires the right man at HHS, to disperse its vast funds to their pet causes, but that argument was insufficient for the scandalized public.

■ Geithner, whose offenses were worse, should be dismissed. He is an eminent example of our new two-tiered tax code—one law for us yokels, another, more generous system for politically connected friends of Barack Obama. Geithner failed to pay various self-employment taxes in spite of the fact that his employer paid him many thousands of dollars to offset those very taxes (what, *your* employer doesn't give you an allowance to make up for your taxes?) and in spite of the fact that, upon accepting that money, Geithner signed a form reading: "I hereby certify that all the information contained herein is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and that I will pay the taxes for which I have received tax allowance payment." Perhaps most galling is that Geithner made good on some of his debts but declined to pay his 2001–02 taxes, an offense for which the statute of limitations had conveniently expired. Now you know why Democrats don't worry about tax hikes—even, or especially, on the rich.

■ While campaigning for president, Barack Obama repeatedly pledged that lobbyists "won't find a job in my White House." With the election over, he soon learned that excluding people who are knowledgeable in their fields simply because they made money off that knowledge is no way to build a staff. So he set his assistants to work manufacturing loopholes, and by late January *National Journal* reported that Obama had "nominated two recent lobbyists to high-level administration posts, and 14 of the 112 White House staffers that Obama had named had been registered as lobbyists at some point since 2005."

ROMAN GENN

See page 12.

Anyone who wants the president to hire the best people available should indulge him in this mild reversal. The only thing about it that rankles is the hypocrisy.

■ President Obama took a swipe at Rush Limbaugh, telling Republicans whom he'd brought into the White House to discuss the stimulus bill that "you can't just listen" to him "and get things done." Obama thinks he is being clever, making a broadcaster the voice of the GOP. In fact he has outfoxed himself. We deeply admire Rush Limbaugh, but he is a journalist, as are we. The president and a small circle of other politicians belong to a different class. When they want to dis us, they should dispatch some hatchet man—a press secretary, a vice president—to do the work. For all his famous cool, Obama showed himself to be a wee bit callow and petty—qualities that will be neither endearing nor useful over the long haul.

■ Michael Steele, the former lieutenant governor of Maryland, won the race to be chairman of the Republican National Committee. The optimistic way of looking at it is that there is a lot of upside potential: The party has far to go in its deployment of technology, fundraising, and organization. He needs, moreover, to remoralize Republicans, and fast. The party suddenly finds itself with many opportunities to take Senate seats

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"There is no disagreement that we need action by our government, a recovery plan that will help to jumpstart the economy."

— PRESIDENT-ELECT BARACK OBAMA, JANUARY 9, 2009

With all due respect Mr. President, that is not true.

Notwithstanding reports that all economists are now Keynesians and that we all support a big increase in the burden of government, we the undersigned do not believe that more government spending is a way to improve economic performance. More government spending by Hoover and Roosevelt did not pull the United States economy out of the Great Depression in the 1930s. More government spending did not solve Japan's "lost decade" in the 1990s. As such, it is a triumph of hope over experience to believe that more government spending will help the U.S. today. To improve the economy, policymakers should focus on reforms that remove impediments to work, saving, investment and production. Lower tax rates and a reduction in the burden of government are the best ways of using fiscal policy to boost growth.

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in 2010: in Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Nevada, New York, and North Dakota. Nobody expects Steele to bring about victory in all of those states, but he can reasonably be asked to back serious challenges in each of them.

■ It's a story out of Shakespeare, with dialogue by Mamet. Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich came up through the same Chicago political machine as Barack Obama, but unfortunately lacked Obama's discretion—as well as his eloquence and talent for useful ambiguity. When FBI wiretaps recorded the Evo Morales—coiffed governor openly hawking Obama's vacated Senate seat like a coprolaliac Wrigley Field vendor, his political career collapsed as suddenly and shockingly as the 2003 Cubs. Blago had committed the one sin deemed unforgivable in Illinois politics: getting caught. Even his wife, Patti (revealed on the tapes to share her husband's taste in adjectives), took a fall, as she was suddenly deemed incapable of performing her well-paid job with a Chicago charity. But all is not lost: Although Blago had to take a haircut on his salary, a generous and non-forfeitable $64,000 annual state pension sweetens his departure.

■ The ascent of Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand to the Senate seat sought, then not sought, by Caroline Kennedy, puts the baroque calculations of Albany on the national stage. Gillibrand, a 42-year-old veteran of all of one House term, has an air of freshness, belied by a family history of politicking: She interned for Al D'Amato, her father was a lobbyist, her grandmother was what the *New York Times* calls a "confidant" of Albany mayor-for-life Erastus Corning. Sen. Charles Schumer pushed Gillibrand as a pro-gun pol (NRA rating: 100 percent) who could carry upstate. But unless she moves left, she will face a primary challenge

The Second Coming of Keynes

As the world's economy has entered a dramatic slowdown, an interesting Keynesian revolution has taken shape. Up until recently, there was wide consensus among macroeconomists that activist fiscal policy was inadvisable. Princeton University's Alan Blinder, for example, wrote in 2004 that "virtually every contemporary discussion of stabilization policy by economists—whether it is abstract or concrete, theoretical or practical—is about monetary policy, not fiscal policy." Blinder went on presciently to question this consensus, but even he cautioned against relying too much on spending, stating that "if Congress decides to stimulate economic activity by building more public infrastructure, the natural spend-out rate of such programs will probably be very slow."

President Obama's economists have disputed that consensus. It was recently reported, for example, that Christina Romer, chairwoman of the Council of Economic Advisors, said "aggressive, well-designed fiscal stimulus is critical to reversing this severe decline." The *New York Times* helpfully added: "The vast majority of the nation's economists agree that one is necessary, and soon."

Statements such as these have been echoed by economists throughout the Obama administration, and by the new director of the Congressional Budget Office, Douglas Elmendorf, in recent congressional testimony. This apparent unanimity has had an enormous effect on the design of the current stimulus package, which calls for massive spending increases along with tax cuts.

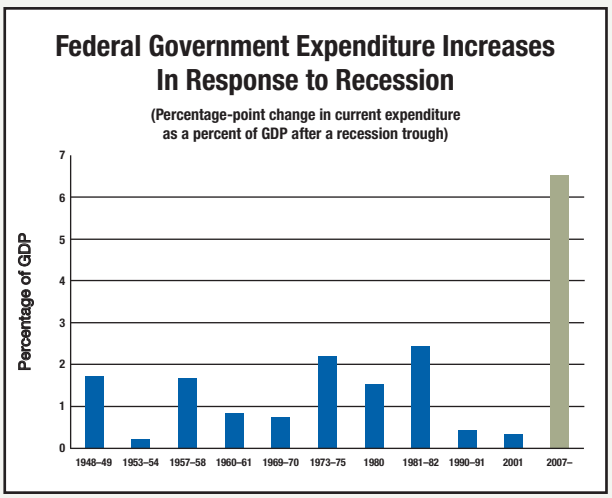
The statements are not, strictly speaking, true. Monetary policy has pushed the economy as far as it can, but fiscal policy need not rely only on the Keynesian bag of temporary tricks.

The accompanying chart documents how dramatic this turn of events has been. It tracks the increase in government spending that occurred in each past recession (in blue) and the increase planned for the current recession. For scaling, all numbers are expressed relative to overall GDP. Until this year, the biggest countercyclical government-spending program in history was in the 1981–82 recession, when government spending increased by a bit more than 2 percent of GDP. In this recession, the increase will be approximately three times that.

The truth is that there is very little empirical support for policies such as these. They will likely provide a small boost, at an enormous cost. When the boost is gone, the cost will remain.

For those economists who are more skeptical of the theories of John Maynard Keynes, there is but one consolation: An experiment this large will provide ample opportunity for study.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



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from Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, who got into politics because her husband was murdered and her son wounded by a crazed gunman on the Long Island Railroad. That might open room for a strong Republican challenger—best would be Rep. Peter King—but the New York GOP has been lacking strength recently, as Democratic control of the governorship, both senate seats, 25 out of 29 house seats, and both houses of the state legislature attests.

■ A lead sentence in a *Washington Post* article deserves to enter the annals of political-reporting history: "Just days after taking office vowing to end the political era of 'petty grievances,' President Obama ran into mounting GOP opposition yesterday to an economic stimulus plan that he had hoped would receive broad bipartisan support." We guess media bias isn't one of those "childish things" to be put away.

■ An article from the Associated Press focused on a little-covered aspect of Obama's greatness: "Rick Bayless," a Chicago chef, "says Obama's comfortable demeanor at the table—slumped contentedly in his chair, clearly there to enjoy himself—bodes well for the nation's food policy. While former President George W. Bush rarely visited restaurants and didn't often talk about what he ate, Obama dines out frequently and enjoys exploring different foods." Three questions: Why didn't they just say that Bush liked Velveeta? The nation has a food policy? Why don't they just title all articles "President Obama Better than Bush in Every Conceivable Way"?

■ Obama has changed one more thing: Business casual is acceptable in the White House on weekends, and he takes his jacket off in the Oval Office when he cranks up the thermostat. (Spokesman David Axelrod attributed Obama's appetite for heat to his Hawaiian background, though wouldn't all those winters in Chicago have frozen it out of him?) One must not judge presidents by appearance alone: One spectator at Abraham Lincoln's inaugural in 1861 found outgoing president James Buchanan "undeniably the more presentable man." Recent Democrats have run to informality: Carter in his sweaters, Clinton . . . well, you know. They speak to the populist pole of the job, and of American politics. Be careful what you discard, however—for there are times of stress, anger, and backlash, when any president longs for whatever additional support a slight air of ceremony confers.

■ Al-Arabiya, the Arab satellite channel based in Dubai, obtained the first televised interview of the Obama administration. The point no doubt was to emphasize that he himself has Muslim roots, and therefore is well placed to deal with the Muslim world, Osama bin Laden and other Islamists included. He called for a relationship with Muslims "based on mutual respect and mutual interest." His job, he elaborated, is "to communicate that Americans are not your enemy." But who, within the reach of rational conversation, ever thought they were? In one military campaign after another, the United States has been liberating Muslim populations from oppression and autocracy. In this interview, Obama also went out of his way to reaffirm the previous administration's policy of working for the establishment of Palestine, yet another Muslim state-to-be. Obama admitted past mistakes and misdeeds on the part of the United States, and al-Arabiya didn't quite complete its scoop by getting him actually to apologize for them, but it certainly served to whet expectations.

■ The stimulus package is a magic hat out of which Democrats pull rabbits to feed to their pet causes. Nancy Pelosi, worried about the state of children's health, hit upon an ingenious solution: fewer children. To that end, she attempted to fertilize the stimulus package with "family planning" funds and offered this gem of an explanation: "Well, the family-planning services reduce cost. They reduce cost. The states are in terrible fiscal budget crises now and part of what we do for children's health, education, and some of those elements are to help the states meet their financial needs. One of those—one of the initiatives you mentioned, the contraception, will reduce costs to the states and to the federal government." Pelosi's view of children is disturbingly instrumentalist, but even taken on her own terms it is backward: True, having fewer children today means fewer future users of children's health services. But it also means fewer future workers, future taxpayers, future contributors to the national good of all kinds. Pelosi's views make sense only if one thinks children are a net loss to the country. Republicans were right to insist that the "family planning" funds be extracted from the bill. One frivolous provision down, many to go.

Nancy Pelosi, worried about the state of children's health, hit upon an ingenious solution: fewer children.

■ Democrats in Congress put provisions into the stimulus bill that would prohibit the procurement of foreign-made steel and iron for use in most of the bill's infrastructure projects. Such "Buy American" provisions are doubly damaging: They force higher prices on consumers and invite retaliation from our trading partners. The last time the government intervened to help the steel industry—the steel tariffs of 2002—the EU promptly drew up a list of products it planned to hit with $2.2 billion worth of retaliatory sanctions. The Bush administration reversed course in the face of disaster, and the head of the steelworkers union was furious. "Our trading partners obviously engaged the administration in a game of guts poker," he said. "Instead of telling them to 'bring it on,' the president blinked." Who cares how many American exporters would have lost their jobs due to crippling sanctions, right? Expect such ignorant rhetoric to resurface now that Obama has voiced his opposition to the idea of starting a trade war in the midst of a recession.

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■ President Obama has boldly followed through on his commitment to close the military prison at Guantanamo Bay—sort of. His executive order promises that the facility will be closed within a year, a non-binding deadline he could extend simply by signing another order. And when Gitmo does close, what will become of the 245 alien enemy combatants currently in detention? If released, many will probably return to terrorism; a Saudi set free in 2007 is thought to have rejoined al-Qaeda and participated in last fall's bombing of the U.S. embassy in Yemen. Similar gaps and flip-flops pervade Obama's detainee policy, if it can be called a policy: We'd love to close Guantanamo, but we can't right now; we'd love to find them new homes, but other countries don't want them; we'd love to give them civilian trials, but we don't have enough usable evidence; we'd love to release them, but they're dangerous; and we'd love to stick to gentle interrogation techniques, but every now and then something more severe may be warranted (such as outsourcing the interrogation to a less fastidious nation). Underneath all the lofty rhetoric, we're gratified to see that this is change George W. Bush could believe in.

■ Obama also issued an executive order overturning the pro-life "Mexico City" policy that Republican presidents have followed over the last three decades. Under that policy, groups that advocate or commit abortions could not receive money from our international family-planning programs. Now they can. Obama waited until the day after the anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade* and the March for Life to make his order, which is being treated as a noble gesture of respect. If Obama understood pro-lifers better, he would know that being treated nicely is not one of their main concerns.

■ If President Obama is sincere in his stated intention to reform entitlements, he needs Republican support. As eager as many Democrats may be to raise taxes to pay for Social Security and Medicare, they are unlikely to want to take full responsibility for it—and Republicans will not, and should not, sign up for an entitlement solution that increases the programs' burden on the economy. A bipartisan deal could still be made, however, if Washington tackles Social Security, the easier of the two programs to fix, first. To get Republican support, tax increases would have to be taken off the table. To get Democratic support, using Social Security taxes to fund personal accounts would have to be taken off the table. The program could then be made solvent mostly by slowing the growth of benefits. (To placate Democrats, the benefit growth need not be slowed down for poor people.) Democrats have long advocated setting up savings accounts outside Social Security, a good idea that Republicans should accept. The country will be better off. And in 2012, as he campaigns for re-election, Obama will be able to say that for all his stimulus spending, he made good on his pledge to oversee a "net spending cut"—surprising everyone, including, most likely, himself.

■ While we'd like to believe that the Obama administration has caught a sudden case of acute federalism, we do not believe that explains the president's desire to allow California to enforce its own strict auto-emissions rules, which exceed federal standards. One reason for our doubt is that Obama is also calling on the Transportation Department to tighten automotive-fuel-economy requirements nationally. Here, he is actually serving the third Bush term: New standards already were required under the Energy Independence and Security Act signed by President Bush in 2007, and Obama advocates nothing more than imposition of the law's existing requirements. But the California rules are more troubling: This is hardly the hour to impose expensive new regulations on U.S. automakers, and the California rules, owing to the size and importance of that state's market, would become de facto national standards. Obama is throwing a fat green sop at his all-important grad-student eco-activist constituency. His moves will do little or nothing to address legitimate environmental concerns (the California rules, even if enforced nationally, would have a negligible effect on global warming), but the costs will be real.

■ Richard Nadler has a bracing piece in this issue (see page 28) arguing that the restrictionist position on immigration is political disaster for Republicans. We think Nadler underestimates the effect of the general degradation of the Republican brand on the 2008 election results. Enforcement of immigration laws has to be the start of any rational policy, and it's politically saleable so long as its advocates avoid rhetorical excess and don't over-rely on it (it's not a substitute for a compelling agenda on other issues). We look forward to the debate over Nadler's piece, which readers can follow on National Review Online.

AP

■ Iraqis voted in peaceful and orderly provincial elections, another sign that the improved security environment forged by the surge is sustainable. Prime Minister Maliki's Dawa party, running as the party of law and order, appears to have drubbed the main Shiite religious party, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, which was hampered by its support for federalism, its connections to Iran, and its ineffectuality. In Sunni areas, the elections were an opportunity for those who had boycotted provincial elections in 2005 finally to come all the way in from the cold, moving from supporting the insurgency to taking positions on provincial councils. But the established Iraqi Islamic party, which had disproportionate sway because it didn't sit out the 2005 ballot, appears to have minimized gains by the new Sunni political players. As a result, tensions are

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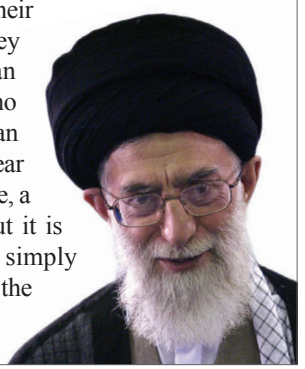
high in Anbar, where disappointed Sunni parties are crying foul. There is a tendency on the right and the left now to declare the Iraq War over. Although the war has entered a new—and most welcome—stage, U.S. forces are still necessary to keep political tensions from flaring into violence. It continues to be astounding that people in what a few years ago was one of the most repressive countries on earth can now vote their preferences and proudly display ink-stained fingers afterwards. May it become an Iraqi national tradition.

■ Ever since Obama's election, the State Department has been busy drafting a letter to Iran, or so the London *Guardian* confidently reports and everyone seems to believe. What's more, it's to be a sweetheart letter. It might be sent to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, or addressed openly to the Iranian people. The letter gives assurance that Washington does not seek regime change in Iran. They're said to be still working on the draft, but its main thrust is that Washington is merely asking for civilized behavior—for instance, no more state-sponsored terrorism. In anticipation of a major concession that it has done nothing to deserve, Tehran naturally remains unimpressed, presumably in the expectation of still more. On behalf of the Islamist regime, President Ahmadinejad calls for real change, adding that Americans must also apologize and "try to make up for their dark background and the crimes they have committed against the Iranian nation" over a period of 60 years, no less. A spokesman has added that Iran has no intention of stopping its nuclear activities. In the language of the Bible, a soft answer turneth away wrath, but it is more probable that this letter will simply bounce off a founding member of the Axis of Evil.



■ Israel has derived several advantages from its recent campaign in Gaza. At last, it put an end to the long-running and inexplicable failure to respond to the thousands of missiles that Hamas and its associates have enjoyed firing from Gaza into Israel in recent years. The Israeli military performed well, proving that the tactics of the previous but less successful campaign against Hezbollah have been revised and improved. Casualties were at a minimum. Provoking Israel has been shown once again to be a costly proposition. The neighboring Arab states, now thoroughly alarmed by Iranian imperialism, have tacitly supported Israel. Hamas has already violated the recently concluded ceasefire many times, and is smuggling arms in while trumpeting that it has won a divine victory. Israel may not be able to deter Hamas and Iran indefinitely. In which case the unfortunate Palestinians will have to rid themselves of Hamas, or become accustomed to living in the ruins of divine victories of this sort.

■ Last year Dutch conservative parliamentarian Geert Wilders made a short film titled *Fitna*, that being the Arabic word for "discord." In the film, Wilders explored themes of violence in Islam and the Koran. Muslims made a fuss, Wilders retorted with some off-the-cuff anti-Islamist remarks, and hate-crime charges against Wilders ended up on the desk of the nation's public prosecutor. Last June that dignitary decided that there was no case for prosecution. Muslim activists appealed, and now the appeals court says there is too a case: "Statements which create hate and grief made by politicians, taking their special responsibility into consideration, are not permitted according to European standards." An indictment is now being drawn up. This "diversity" authoritarianism has had a predictable result: Public support for Wilders's party—which holds nine seats in the 150-seat Dutch lower chamber—has increased since the legal actions against him began.

■ On January 31, the Communist party in the Czech Republic—yes, it still exists—delivered a letter to Obama at the U.S. embassy in Prague. It urged the new president to abandon the Bush administration's plans to build a small missile-defense system in Eastern Europe. There's no official word yet on whether Obama intends to do their bidding, though his criticism of missile defense as a candidate is worrisome. America's adversaries clearly hope he reverses the Bush position. Right after his election, in a transparent attempt to intimidate, Russia announced it would deploy cruise missiles in Kaliningrad to counter the U.S. interceptors slated for Poland. Having flashed this stick, Moscow has gone on to offer a carrot: Unnamed officials hinted to reporters in January that perhaps they wouldn't deploy those cruise missiles after all. Yet the need for missile defense persists, as Iran moves forward with its nuclear agenda and North Korea prepares to test the latest version of its long-range missile, the Taepodong-2. All of the "smart diplomacy" in the world won't stop a warhead in flight.

■ It's time the West started looking to China for human-rights inspiration. Or so says Sir Jonathon Porritt, one of the U.K.'s leading environmental advisers. He suggests a two-child limit to combat global warming. Further, the problem isn't just couples' having more than two children, but also women who get pregnant accidentally and don't abort: "We still have one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in Europe and we still have relatively high levels of pregnancies going to birth, often among women who are not convinced they want to become mothers." Were it not for his government position, it would be easy to classify Porritt's views as fringe. As it is, we're keeping our babies stateside.

■ Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre nicely illustrated the dead end of "traditionalist" opposition to Vatican II. In 1988, against Pope John Paul II's orders, he consecrated four priests as bishops. They were promptly excommunicated, sundering, in consequence of Lefebvre's pride and folly, the unity toward which Christian tradition rightly aspires. That division outlived Lefebvre. Now Pope Benedict XVI has tried to start bringing his lost sheep home by lifting the excommunication. The decision has not played well in the media, which have sometimes suggested that the pope is signaling that the Lefebvrists' views—one of the bishops denies the Holocaust and spouts 9/11 Trutherism—are legitimate. He isn't. A certain amount of press cluelessness about the church is to be expected, but Rome ought to consider whether better media relations would serve its

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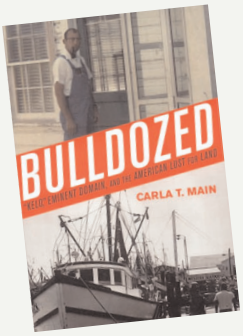
teaching mission. As for the Lefebvrists, their leaders do not seem all that keen on reconciliation. Faithful Catholics should say a prayer for them, and their followers.

■ According to news reports, an unmarried California mother of octuplets—she already had six children—had all 14 through in vitro fertilization. The lady deserves credit for turning down "selective reduction." But the decisions that led to the pregnancy in the first place, by both this woman and the lightly regulated industry that appears to have helped her, should be condemned. To create children outside marriage through carelessness is bad enough. To do it deliberately, and on an industrial scale, is worse.

■ Olympic medalist Michael Phelps got his picture, smoking a bong, in the Brit tabloid *News of the World*. A publicity panic attack—among celebrity mavens, and Phelps's handlers—ensued. Phelps is perhaps the best swimmer in history (he won eight gold medals at the Beijing Olympics). Now he wants to cash in, which means he must play by a new set of rules: You stray, we see. But aren't those rules sick? Like any great athlete, Phelps made a demanding bargain, giving up childhood and adolescence to pursue excellence. Is the normal life he forswore so empty that millions of the rest of us must spend portions of it ogling the famous? Give Phelps a break; give ourselves a break.

■ Just two decades after the Cold War's end, we shouldn't need Armando Valladares to point out the horrors of Communism. But when filmmakers put out works like *Che*, we are fortunate to have the likes of Valladares taking to the public square. Once a Cuban political prisoner, he now speaks out against the effort to rewrite history: "[*Che* actor] Benicio Del Toro is just one of the many accomplices of the Cuban tyranny," he told the *Washington Times*. Too bad no one wears a T-shirt with Valladares's face on it.

■ H. Walker Royall is a Dallas real-estate developer who ought to be ashamed of himself twice over—once for trying to abuse eminent domain to seize property from its rightful owners for his purposes, and again for trying to silence those who have criticized this low tactic. Among those in Royall's crosshairs is our friend and NATIONAL REVIEW contributor Roger Kimball, the publisher of Encounter Books, which brought out Carla Main's *Bulldozed*, an exposé of Royall's project in Freeport, Tex. Royall has filed lawsuits against the publisher and the author, and has even gone to the ludicrous length of suing a professor who wrote a back-of-the-book blurb and a newspaper that published a positive review. In this diminished age, Texans' traditional methods for dealing with varmints of this variety have fallen into disfavor, but the Institute for Justice, a public-interest law firm, is taking up its cudgels for free speech and private property.



■ Back in China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution 40 years ago, anyone who wanted to avoid a beating by Red Guards made sure to carry a copy of *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*, more familiarly known as the Little Red Book. Sample quotation: "Thrift should be the guiding principle in our government expenditure." Hmm. The keener sort of patriot memorized the book, and one still runs across middle-aged Chinese people who can rattle off the whole thing. A few still keener types memorized the Little Red Book *backwards*: "Expenditure government our in principle" and so on. Well, here comes *Pocket Obama*, a handy ("easily fits into pocket or purse") blue-jacketed compendium of our new president's apothegms for those of us who might find ourselves needing a fresh shot of Obamian rhetoric in the midst of our daily round. Peering into the Little Blue Book, we find only the gassy, content-free fustian of Obama's campaign speeches, page after soporific page. Some say it's a spoof, but how can they tell? Perhaps it reads better backwards.

■ Understandably, the Left doesn't like it much when you say that too often politics is their religion, or environmentalism is their religion, or something other than religion is their religion. But Susan Sarandon doesn't help when she says of Obama: "He is a community organizer like Jesus was, and now we're a community and he can organize us." Actually, we're a free society. But perhaps Sarandon would be more comfortable in a system more . . . organized?

■ Over in England, a cricket club named the Middlesex Crusaders has felt obliged to change its name to the Middlesex Panthers. There had been complaints from Muslim and Jewish persons still smarting from the humiliations and cruelties of 900 years ago, apparently having nothing more important to think about. So much for the second part of the club's name. We await with resignation their buckling to the demands of the "transgender" lobbies, who will not, we feel sure, be deterred by the information that "Middlesex" is the name of an English county.

■ Nurse Caroline Petrie, a Christian, making her departure after a home visit to 79-year-old May Phippen in an English town, offered to pray for the patient. "No, thank you," replied Mrs. Phippen, and later mentioned the incident to a different nurse, who reported it to her superiors. Klaxons went off, bureaucrats scurried to battle stations, and the Sensitivity Police were alerted. Nurse Petrie has been suspended for breaching her code of conduct on equality and diversity. She may lose her job. Our advice to her would be to convert to Islam. Any objections to her offers of spiritual succor would then be hate crimes.

■ Linguistic conservatives should arm for battle: The humble apostrophe is under threat in various parts of the Anglosphere. One English municipality has dropped it from street signs for places like St. Paul's Square. Australian grammarian Kate Burridge (author of *Weeds in the Garden of Words*) wants the possessive apostrophe scrapped altogether. A professor at University College, London, is arguing that strict rules of spelling and grammar "hold children back," and he wants the

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apostrophe completely eliminated. Defenders of the little critter have counterattacked with examples of sentences ambiguous in an apostrophe-free world: "Those smelly things are my brothers," for example. American conservatives should join the fray in defense of traditional usage. Of course, we shall need to enlist some good conservative and academic names in the cause: our own Kate O'Beirne, perhaps; Dinesh D'Souza; novelist-professor John L'Heureux; Nobel physicist Gerardus 't Hooft . . . In any case, there is nothing difficult or mysterious about correct placement of the apostrophe. The rules can be learned in ten minutes. This campaign will need all the support it can get. It certainly has our's!

■ A cat may look at a king, goes the old proverb. And canines show little respect for the mighty, at least in France. When Napoleon climbed into bed with Josephine on their wedding night, the bride's little pug sank its teeth into his shin. (The name of the heroic canine was Fortuné.) History repeated itself the other day, after a fashion, when former French president Jacques Chirac was attacked by Sumo, his pet Maltese poodle. Chirac's wife, Bernadette, explained that Sumo has become increasingly violent in recent years and is being treated with anti-depressant medications. After a few years' close acquaintance with the bumptious Chirac, any person, or pooch, might be similarly disposed. We wish the 76-year-old former president a speedy recovery nonetheless, and hope our own president's much-discussed pet will have a less aggressive temperament.

■ We bid farewell to John Updike, R.I.P., elsewhere (see p. 43). Here we note one accolade conferred on him, in 1978, by WFB, who, in one of his syndicated columns, "disavow[ed] a living legend, namely that I am the American fountainhead of recondite words. . . . The proximate cause of my declaration is a splendid novel by John Updike called *The Coup*. I read it and here is a list of words in that novel with which *I* am unfamiliar: Harmattan, disphoretic, toubab, laterite, suras, euphorbia, extollation, jerboa, coussabe, sareba, bilharzia, pangolins, hyraxes, pestles, phloem, xylem, eversion, goobers, marabout, xerophytic, oleograph, cowries, chrysoprase, henna, scree, riverine, adsorptive, haptic, burnoose. And so I pass on the sesquipedalian torch." Now both WFB and Updike have left us; the world is a duller (because less surprising) place.

YURI GRIPAS/UPI

THE ECONOMY

The Right Stimulus

THE Democrats' stimulus bill did not get a single Republican vote in the House, a fact that set liberals to speculating that Republicans have a death wish for the economy, themselves, or both. But the case for the bill is getting harder and harder to make, which is perhaps why Democrats are making it less and less.

Instead they are chest-thumping: Several Democratic leaders, including President Obama, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Democratic senator Richard Durbin, have in recent weeks predicted that they would get their way because they "won the election." True enough; but Republican officeholders won their elections as well, and have no obligation to vote for legislation they consider ill-advised. So the Democrats are making threats. Ads claim that opponents of the stimulus have voted to tank the economy.

Americans are well-disposed toward the new president—which is one reason House Republicans insist that Pelosi, rather than Obama, made the bill unacceptable—worried about the economy, and eager (probably over-eager) for federal action. But they are not sold on this bill. Nor should they be. It is an expensive hodgepodge of liberal nostrums, many of which make no sense even in Keynesian terms. It does nothing to stabilize financial markets, nothing to help the housing market find its bottom, nothing to improve work incentives, and nothing to restore corporate profits.

Republicans understand that rejecting a flawed stimulus is not enough. They need to propose alternatives. Those alternatives should include reductions in the job-killing, wage-cutting payroll tax, an expansion of the child tax credit, and a reduction in corporate taxes. Mark-to-market accounting rules should be modified so as not to force a downward spiral in financial-asset prices. The two-fleet rule, which makes it hard for automakers to meet their fuel-economy requirements economically, should be ended. States and localities should be freed to meet their need for roads. Finally, it might be a good idea to encourage mortgage holders to refinance at low rates, less to set a floor under the housing market than to isolate those mortgages that might go into default.

House Republicans were right to reject the Democrats' stimulus and to propose alternatives. Senate Republicans should follow their lead. Unless the stimulus bill is greatly improved, it will not deserve support.

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The Survivor

Rep. Peter King points the way for Republicans in the Northeast

BY MARK HEMINGWAY

Rep. Peter King's Washington, D.C., office is stuffed full of New York memorabilia. Every wall is covered with framed photos of actors and baseball players (King's allegiance lies with the Mets). In terms of décor, the Long Island congressman's office is reminiscent of one of the Big Apple's touristy delis.

There's one thing about his office that makes it unusual for a New York politician: It belongs to a Republican. As the 111th Congress begins, New York's congressional delegation has 29 seats. Only three belong to Republicans (one is vacant), and King's district is the only Republican district in the entire southern half of the state, which encompasses more than three-quarters of the population.

"It's about 300 miles before you get to the next Republican district," observes King, now in his ninth term. Even more remarkable, his political career is thriving. In 2006 and 2008 he beat his Democratic opponents by 12 and 28 points, respectively, in election cycles that saw Republicans take heavy losses nationally.

Even King is surprised by the level of support he's received. "In the last two elections, my hard reelect numbers are as high as they've ever been," he says, employing the political term that describes the percentage of voters who say they'll vote for a candidate regardless of his opponent.

His profile in New York, as well as nationally, is also on the rise. One of the more intriguing subplots to Caroline Kennedy's failed bid to be appointed to Hillary Clinton's vacated Senate seat was that King was her presumed opponent in 2010. With Kennedy out, King says he's still tentatively interested in running against Kirsten Gillibrand, the one-term congresswoman from upstate who eventually received the appointment.

In fact, while he was still deciding whom to appoint to the Senate seat, New York's Democratic governor, David Paterson, floated King's name. "I didn't rule out any Republicans; they ruled me out because they never asked," Paterson told reporters. "Peter King and I are great friends. We go to dinner often. He should have called."

Asked about Paterson's comments, King laughs and replies, "We put a call in to his office." He explains that he met Paterson in the green room of a television show over a decade ago. They've been friends ever since.

King maintains remarkably good relations with his Democratic colleagues. Former New York mayor Ed Koch practically tumbles over himself to praise the congressman. "I think he's one of the greatest public servants and we're lucky to have him in New York. I've supported him, crossing party lines, for his position as a member of Congress, and he's done a superb job there," Koch raves. "He is a person I can only say good things about."

Put simply, the obvious question is: What is King doing right at a time when northeastern Republicans are an endangered species and partisan acrimony threatens to engulf national politics?

Some aspects of King are inimitable. His retail political skill comes naturally; he has a genial nature and a mercurial mind, both hallmarks of his proud Irish heritage. The son of a police officer, raised in Queens, King has developed an intuitive grasp of New York's labyrinthine politics and thrives in the state's hostile media environment.

King's success is hard-earned. He slugged it out in the trenches of local politics for over two decades before rising to the national stage. After graduating from Notre Dame Law School in 1968, he went to work for the Nassau County district attorney's office. In 1977 he won his first elected position, on the Hempstead town council, with the help of Long Island's once-formidable Republican machine. Following that, he went on to win three consecutive terms as the Nassau County comptroller. King had an unusual amount of political experience under his belt, as well as a reputation as an independent thinker, long before he ran for Congress in 1992.

Through a combination of shrewdness and principle, King appears to have found exactly the right political balance to prosper as a blue-state Republican: "I call myself a blue-collar conservative, so on key conservative issues I never change. I'm strong on defense, I supported the war in Iraq all the way, supported the surge, I'm very strong on homeland security, Islamic terrorism. I'm pro-life; on all the social issues I'm 100 percent conservative."

Economically, King diverges from conservatism in ways that help strengthen his blue-collar appeal: "I have a very strong relationship with the building-trades unions. On issues like Davis-Bacon, I would vote with the unions. So did Ronald

ISMAEL ROLDAN

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Reagan for that matter," King says, referring to the Depression-era "prevailing wage" law that's a cornerstone of union legislation. Indeed, even the Teamsters union—usually an enemy of Republicans—has praised and supported King.

When King commits to an issue politically, he's tenacious. He is perhaps best known as a congressional advocate of homeland-security measures. When the House Committee on Homeland Security was established in the wake of September 11, King lobbied hard to be on the committee before taking over the chairmanship in 2005. (He remains the ranking member.) In 2006, the Bush administration tried to slash New York's homeland-security funding by 40 percent. King said the cuts amounted to "declar[ing] war on New York," and he was instrumental in making sure his state received the second-largest homeland-security funding increase the next year, after Washington, D.C. New York City police commissioner Ray Kelly calls King "our fiercest defender." King, one of whose hobbies is writing novels, is so obsessed with homeland security that *Vale of Tears*, the latest of the three page-turners he's written, is about a congressman named Sean Cross who valiantly attempts to head off an Islamic terrorist attack.

"I've been very aggressive about what I believe in. I just think it's easier to get it out there and have people agree or disagree rather than spending a few months trying to make my message sound better than it is or try and disguise it somehow," King says. "Even in '06 during the worst of times, I never backed off supporting the necessity of the war in Iraq. I never backed off supporting the Patriot Act, FISA, Guantanamo, interrogations—all of that I believe is absolutely essential."

King's outspokenness occasionally gets him in trouble. In 2007 he ignited a firestorm when he was quoted as saying America had "too many mosques." (King says he was referring to the number of mosques that don't cooperate with the FBI in fighting Islamist terrorism.) His fierce support of Irish nationalism—his uncle fought in the Tan War—has occasionally aligned him with the some of more unsavory proponents of that cause, though in recent years he has toned down his support for the Irish Republican Army.

Yet despite the occasional stumble, few Republicans have his deft touch with the media. To say King doesn't shy away from the press would be an understatement; *Politico.com* calls him a "quote machine." And he knows where to find a congenial outlet: "I try and take advantage of television and radio as much as I can to go over the heads of the print media, especially since I have [the liberal] *Newsday* as the main paper in my district."

King is dismayed by the criticism he endures from Republicans who don't share his particular Irish Catholic view of the world. "I believe in original sin and that people have human failings. That also is the basis of conservatism and why you don't want to give too much power to any one person or entity, because we have these failings," he says. At the same time, he cautions against "always trying to sound self-righteous," and here King practices what he preaches. Last year, when fellow New York Republican congressman Vito Fossella was arrested for drunk driving and later revealed to have a mistress and love child, King penned an op-ed for the *New York Post* defending Fossella's record as a public servant and excoriating the media for continuing to push the story after Fossella announced he would not seek re-election. "We can be for very strong social values, be very pro-life, be very supportive of the military, and not be always be passing judgment on others with a moral tone," he says.

For King, a lack of empathy explains why Republicans are out of touch on any number of issues. "I think we need to find ways to identify with people's everyday life from a conservative point of view," he points out. "Often I see Republicans go on television and it's the same talking points and it's a Washington-oriented or—and I don't mean to start a civil war or anything—maybe it's focused more on what people in rural areas are focused on, as opposed to the Northeast."

Perhaps King's diagnosis of the GOP's ills isn't unique. But his proven ability to fly the Republican flag in challenging circumstances certainly makes him a rarity, as does his optimism. "I think that the New York that elected Jim Buckley and voted for Ronald Reagan twice and elected D'Amato and Pataki is still there. I know the demographics are changing, but close to, if not more than, 50 percent of the state could vote 'blue-collar conservative.'"

Should King decide to run for the Senate in 2010, it won't just be his own hopes—it may well be the hopes of his entire party—that get put to the test. **NR**

The Hot Seat

Can pro-life Democrats continue to make a difference?

BY RAMESH PONNURU

THERE are more pro-life Democrats, even now, than you might think. There's no denying that the numbers have dropped off over the years. In the early years of the abortion debate, pro-lifers could boast—if that's the right word—the support of Ted Kennedy and Dick Durbin. There were about 100 pro-life Democrats in the House in the late 1970s. Democratic voters were more likely to be pro-life than Republican voters even in the late 1980s. Since then the party rank-and-file has moved left on the issue, and the Kennedys and Durbins have moved with them.

But in recent years, separate polls by John Zogby and by Kellyanne Conway have found that about a third of Democratic voters still consider themselves pro-life. Even more Democrats favor pro-life policies such as a ban on abortions with exceptions for rape, incest, and threats to the mother's life. In the last two election cycles, Democrats have been willing to run a few pro-life candidates against pro-life Republicans, and some of those Democratic candidates have won. Five new pro-life Democrats were elected to the House in November—including a woman, Kathy Dahlkemper of Erie, Pa. (Pro-lifers are always especially happy to see a female ally elected. Relative to their numbers in the population at large, pro-life women are vastly underrepresented in Congress.)

In the Senate, there are only two Democrats who vote with pro-lifers on most issues: Bob Casey Jr. of Pennsylvania and Ben Nelson of Nebraska. In the House, pro-lifers can usually get about 25 Democrats to support their positions. The precise number depends on the issue. In the last Congress, only 16 Democrats voted against providing taxpayer dollars for stem-cell research

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that destroys human embryos. Thirty-one voted against a bill to allow the cloning of embryos to be destroyed in such research.

Most of the pro-life Democrats are to the right of their party on a large spectrum of issues, but not all of them are. Dale Kildee of Michigan usually votes with pro-lifers—although in the last Congress he defected on stem-cell research—but also got a 100 percent rating from the liberal group Americans for Democratic Action last year. (The American Conservative Union gives him a career score of less than 13 percent agreement with it.)

Like pro-life Republicans, pro-life Democrats vary in the intensity and sincerity of their commitment to their putative cause. Bart Stupak of Michigan has a solid pro-life record and has served as the Democratic co-chairman of the House Pro-Life Caucus. Lincoln Davis of Tennessee is another pro-life stalwart. He is the sponsor of the Pregnant Women Support Act, an initiative of the Democrats for Life of America.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a lot of Democratic pro-lifers (and a few Republican pro-lifers) switched with great fanfare to the pro-choice side, in keeping with the conventional wisdom of the day about the political direction of the country. In recent years we have seen a new phenomenon: Democrats who claim to continue to be pro-life but no longer vote that way.

Senate majority leader Harry Reid of Nevada is the most prominent member of this category. Since he became the leader of his caucus in 2005, he has voted with pro-lifers exactly three times: twice on a parental-notification bill, once on whether the federal Indian Health Service should fund abortions. Eight times he has voted the other way. He backs embryo-destructive research. He thinks groups that commit or promote abortion should receive some of the money our government gives to promote family planning overseas. (The money does not go directly for abortions or abortion advocacy, but it frees up other money for those purposes.) At the end of January, he voted to stop the federal health-care program for children from covering unborn children. Reid may still consider himself a pro-lifer, but if so he has an idiosyncratic definition of the term.

Rep. Jim Langevin of Rhode Island is on an advisory board of the Democrats for Life. Paralyzed by an accident at age 16, Langevin supports embryo-destructive stem-cell research as a way to help people with similar ailments. In the last Congress, however, he did more than just vote to fund such research and to allow cloning to advance it. He also voted against pro-lifers on the foreign-aid question and on funding for Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest abortion provider.

Rep. Tim Ryan, who represents the Youngstown area of Ohio, is a self-proclaimed pro-lifer. He worked with his staunchly pro-choice colleague Rosa DeLauro (who represents New Haven, Conn.) to introduce the "Reducing the Need for Abortions and Supporting Parents Act." The legislation has been billed as an attempt to find common ground on abortion, although the common ground was confined to Democrats: The bill had 40 Democratic and zero Republican co-sponsors in the last Congress. The bill's focus is on promoting contraception. Most pro-lifers have shied away from the bill, since it would increase federal funding for Planned Parenthood and because there isn't much evidence that federal efforts to promote contraception really would reduce the abortion rate. (Most pro-lifers are less than thrilled by the bill title, too, with its implication that right now abortion is needed.)

Even though Ryan presents himself as a pro-lifer, he did not cast a single pro-life vote in the last Congress. He broke with pro-lifers on stem-cell funding, on cloning, on foreign aid, and, of course, on Planned Parenthood funding. Nowadays his allegedly "pro-life" advocacy consists entirely of working with Congresswoman DeLauro to funnel more money to abortion providers.

Among non-Democratic pro-lifers—the vast bulk of pro-lifers these days, that is—there is palpable frustration with their Democratic brethren. Pro-life Democrats had a window of opportunity after the 2004 election, when everyone from defeated presidential candidate John Kerry to strategist Donna Brazile was blaming the party's travails in part on its abortion extremism. Party chairman Howard Dean was among those who signaled a new openness to pro-lifers.

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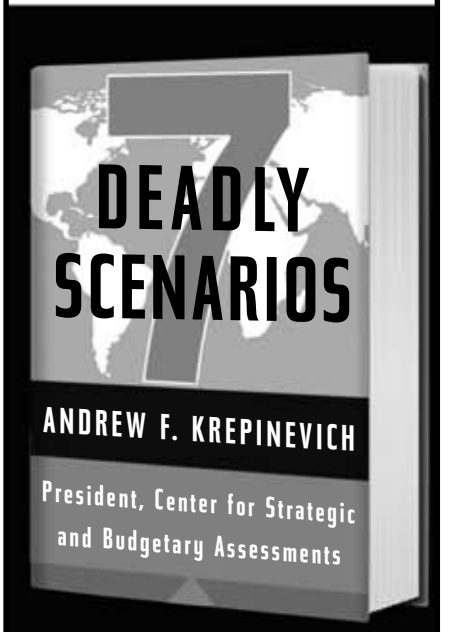

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But pro-life Democrats did not take advantage of the moment. The 2008 Democratic platform declares, "The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports *Roe* v. *Wade* and a woman's right to choose a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay, and we oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right." That bit about the "ability to pay" is a coded endorsement of taxpayer funding for abortion. Yet prominent pro-life Democrats, including the head of Democrats for Life, Kristen Day, pronounced themselves pleased at the progress the party had made, since the platform also endorsed welfare spending to help women who keep their children.

Nor did many pro-life Democratic leaders balk at supporting Barack Obama for president, notwithstanding his own dreadful record and commitments. As a state legislator Obama took the view—which to this day he has not repudiated—that a child who survives an abortion has no legal right to be treated humanely if the abortionist does not deem the child viable. Senator Casey nonetheless stumped for him in the Democratic presidential primary.

As the election approached, a few pro-lifers argued that Obama would actually better serve the anti-abortion cause than his rival John McCain. Abortion is going to stay legal, the argument ran: Pro-lifers have lost that fight for the duration. What we can do, the argument continued, is reduce the abortion rate by extending health coverage, boosting wages, and so forth, all of which the Democrats would allegedly do.

Whatever else can be said of those arguments, they may be about to be put to a severe test. For while we do not know the exact economic and social policies that would minimize the abortion rate, we do know that taxpayer funding of abortion increases its incidence. Studies by both advocates and foes of abortion, not to mention common sense, say so.

Obama favors the Freedom of Choice Act. That act's sponsors say that it would make partial-birth abortion legal again. It would also sweep away informed-consent laws and waiting periods for abortions. News coverage sometimes implies that whether the act mandates taxpayer funding of abortion is a disputed question. But its sponsors admit that it would. And the bill's language—governments may not "discriminate against the exercise of [abortion] rights . . . in the regulation or provision of benefits"—admits of no other interpretation.

Pro-life Republicans' frustration with pro-life Democrats should be tempered with appreciation. Pro-life Democrats are subject to a lot of pressure from their party, and deserve credit for the extent to which they have stood up to it.

The Democrats may not have the votes to pass FOCA. Since it is not a sure thing, they may not want a fight on it. But the Hyde Amendment, which bans federal funding for most abortions, has to be renewed every year by Congress, so there could well be an attempt to weaken it.

Pro-life Republicans' frustration with pro-life Democrats should be tempered with appreciation. Pro-life Democrats are subject to a lot of pressure from their party, and deserve credit for the extent to which they have stood up to it. Almost no pro-life legislation could have passed, even in the twelve years of GOP Congresses, without the pro-life Democrats. A lot of pro-choice legislation would have passed without them. The question now is what they'll make of their leverage in an all-Democratic Washington. We'll know soon enough. **NR**

The Anti-Keynes

Friedrich Hayek sheds light on our economic troubles

BY LANNY EBENSTEIN

In the current economic-policy debate, the ideas of John Maynard Keynes are resurgent. Here are some of the results: Federal deficit spending soon will reach, and far exceed, previous peacetime peaks. Current projections indicate the budget deficit may surpass $1.1 trillion (that's *trillion* with a "T," one thousand billion) in fiscal 2009. Deepened by emerging stimulus expenses, the deficit may top $1.4 trillion, or about 10 percent of gross domestic product. The federal government will borrow slightly less than half of what it spends.

Before he became the great intellectual opponent of socialism, Friedrich Hayek was a technical economist and Keynes's foremost intellectual disputant during the Great Depression. Given the renaissance in Keynesian thinking, it is fruitful to revisit some of Hayek's analysis for the light it may shed on our current circumstances.

Crucial elements in Hayek's thought are that (1) prices are the signals of worldwide supply and demand for various goods and services, (2) interest rates are vital in guiding production decisions, (3) profits guide resources to those who use them most effectively, and (4) the smaller government is, the better. It could hardly be said that any of these insights informs current policy. Hayek's wisdom is being ignored, a fact that does not bode well for the future of the economy.

It is entirely possible—even likely—that there will be a short-lived turnaround in the economy in the second half of 2009. Both the federal government and the Federal Reserve have been dumping money into the economy and spending like there's no tomorrow. Since 2001, the Fed has followed the most erratic course in its history; the fiscal reversal from a modest federal budget surplus to a pro-

Mr. Ebenstein has written biographies of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman.

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spective $1.4 trillion–plus deficit in this same period is unprecedented in peacetime. Hayek was an agnostic, but if he happens to be watching these developments from a perch in the afterlife, he must be agitated.

Let us focus first on the Fed, since it is the main culprit in the current mess—much as it was during the Great Depression, when its mismanagement of the money supply turned a recession into a catastrophe. The federal-funds rate, the Fed's favored tool for influencing the economy, stood at 6.5 percent in early 2001—in hindsight, excessively high. The Fed undoubtedly contributed to the downturn of 2000–01 by raising the funds rate between 1998 and 2000.

As a result of the economic downturn it helped cause, the Fed began to cut the funds rate in 2001. The rate had been reduced to the 4 percent range before September 11. The Fed then cut it to 1 percent, where it remained through 2004. At that point, concerned about inflation and heedless of the huge concurrent appreciation in home prices—many financed through adjustable-rate mortgages—the Fed raised the funds rate to 5.25 percent between 2004 and June 2006. This will be remembered as one of the most destructive policies the Federal Reserve Board ever pursued.

Hayek emphasized the importance of government-influenced interest rates in his early economic work in the 1920s and 1930s. He was among the first to consider himself a monetarist, meaning an economist who emphasizes the effects of monetary policy on the broader economy, but his brand of monetary economics was very different from that of his most famous colleague and intellectual compatriot, Milton Friedman. Hayek and Friedman taught together for a dozen years at the University of Chicago during the 1950s and early 1960s, and both were members of the Mont Pelerin Society, an international organization devoted to classical liberalism, from the 1940s to the 1980s.

Hayek argued that if interest rates are too low they will attract resources to areas of the economy that would not otherwise be attractive investments. This was certainly the case in the housing bubble. The Fed played at least as important a role as inadequate lending standards in the escalation of house prices between 2002 and 2006, when many real-estate markets saw double-digit annual increases in the sales price of a good that could be acquired for a single-digit down payment. This was the Greenspan housing bubble.

That lending standards for purchases and refinancing also collapsed at this point compounded the problem, of course. Hayek's view was that prices, including the price of borrowing, broadcast important production and resource-direction signals throughout the economy. If the price of money (which is to say, interest) is unstable, or if it becomes possible to borrow for certain economic activities but not for others, this will distort decisions to buy, sell, or invest. Artificially low interest rates helped create an expectation of ever-rising prices, which attracted many home-buyers who otherwise would not

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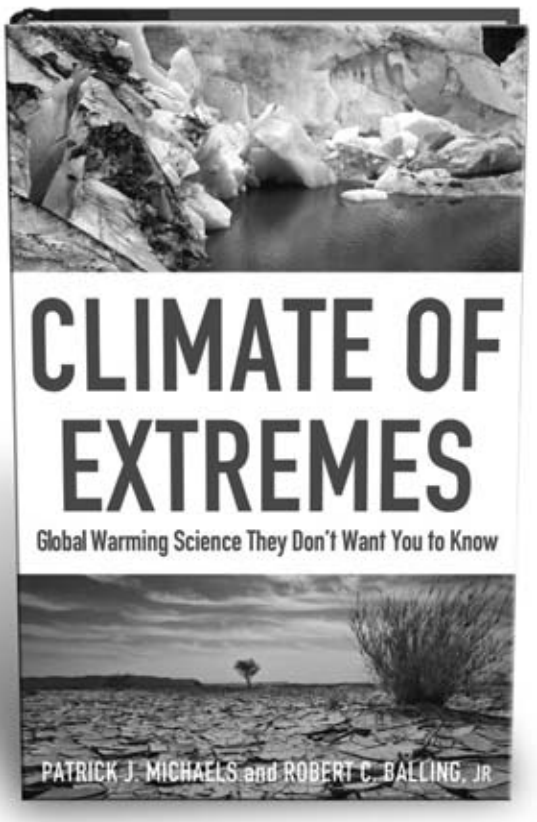

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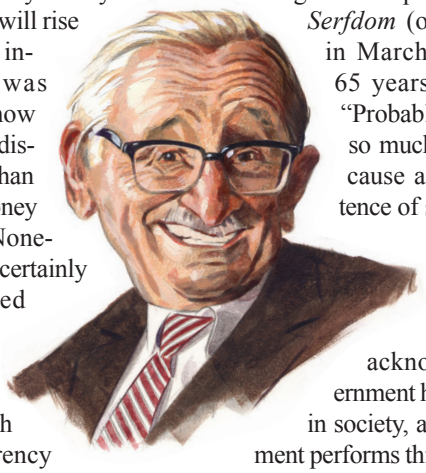
have chosen to purchase houses at what were already historically high prices.

But bubbles cannot last forever. As Greenspan's chairmanship was coming to an end, the Fed began its relentless campaign to raise the federal-funds rate, which reached 5.25 percent in 2006. In retrospect, it is impossible to justify the rise to that level. The excessive increase in the rate between 2004 and 2006 triggered the financial crisis that emerged in August 2007. Policies pursued by the Fed since that time, under chairman Ben Bernanke, have been positive and appropriate; even so, in retrospect it would have been better to lower the federal-funds rate even more in 2007. This might have prevented the financial carnage of late 2008.

What does the future hold? Hayek subscribed to the "quantity theory of money"—that prices will rise if the money supply increases—though he was more concerned with how changes in interest rates distort economic activity than with the influence of money on aggregate prices. Nonetheless, he would have certainly held that the unbridled growth in the money supply in the last quarter of 2008—some 12–13 percent growth in M1 (essentially, currency plus checking deposits), an annualized rate of increase of more than 50 percent—could not continue without escalating inflation.



It is likely that at some point the Fed will raise interest rates and curtail existing measures to increase liquidity in financial institutions. Or it may allow prices to inflate. The United States could be in for a double-dip recession in which economic activity responds to the unprecedented fiscal and monetary stimulus but then hits a wall as interest rates and prices rise. Hayek's adversary, Keynes, recommended fiscal policy rather than monetary policy as the way to steer an economy, and this seems to be the Obama administration's intention.

Its $800 billion–plus stimulus package amounts to a short-term boost to the economy of about 2 percent of gross domestic product per year. That's not a small amount of money, and, together with the Fed's own monetary stimulus, it should lead to short-term economic growth. But in the long run (which Keynes deprecated), truth keeps the score, and it is unlikely that the fiscal policies being adopted by the Obama administration will resolve the fundamental economic difficulties before us. It's not going to represent change Hayek could believe in, but rather more of the same.

Hayek's argument for less government was efficiency. In the private sector, if one can sell a product for more than it costs to produce, then it is efficient to continue producing. But without a price mechanism, how is the efficiency of a government action to be judged?

Hayek emphasized that specific policies are more important than a generalized commitment to free-market principles. He argued this point in *The Road to Serfdom* (originally published in March 1944 in England, 65 years ago next month): "Probably nothing has done so much harm to the liberal cause as the wooden insistence of some liberals on certain rough rules of thumb, above all the principle of laissez-faire." He acknowledged that government has a vital role to play in society, and that how government performs this role is important to the economy.

Hayek also warned in *The Road to Serfdom* against government's consuming too large a proportion of economic output. He worried about the state of freedom and economic productivity in a society dominated by government: "We can unfortunately not indefinitely expand the sphere of common action and still leave the individual free in his own sphere. Once the communal sector . . . exceeds a certain proportion of the whole, the effects of its actions dominate the whole system."

Keynesian ideas of expansive and activist government are prominent now, but it is unlikely that they will provide the right antidote to the maladies that confront the global economy. Hayek's prescription—free markets, limited government, a stable monetary policy, low taxes, and light but appropriate regulation—is more likely to produce lasting prosperity in the long run. **NR**

FRIEDRICH HAYEK, BY DARREN GYGI

A Great and Stirring Hour

Israel's president Shimon Peres shines at Davos

BY JAY NORDLINGER

Davos, Switzerland

THE "global elites" have gathered once more in this Alpine village, for the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum. More than 40 heads of state or government are here, which is almost a quarter of the world's total. The WEF certainly knows how to pull them in.

The main topic of conversation is, of course, the international financial crisis. Indeed, the theme of the meeting—every year, there is a theme—is "Shaping the Post-Crisis World." But there are other topics, including, inevitably, the Middle East. The Middle East, we will always have with us—or at least it seems so now.

One session is devoted to Gaza, where the Israelis have recently completed a major operation, designed to set back Hamas. We will hear from four speakers: Ban Ki-moon, secretary general of the United Nations; Recep Tayyip Erdogan, prime minister of Turkey; Amr Moussa, secretary general of the Arab League; and Shimon Peres, president of Israel. Serving as moderator is *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius.

Ban goes first, chastising Israel, if slightly indirectly: Gaza is miserable, a hell on earth, he says, which is certainly true. And he implies that Israel bears full responsibility. He does not say that Hamas triggered the recent fighting. And he does not say how bad Gaza was for Palestinians—especially non-Hamas ones—before Israel started its operation in late December. What Ban does is decry Israel's hitting of a U.N. building, which he calls "shocking."

Next comes Prime Minister Erdogan, who is in a decidedly anti-Israeli mood. Turkey has played a useful role as mediator between Israel and Syria; but it may be some time before Erdogan is again disposed

Mr. Nordlinger is an NR senior editor. To read his multipart "Davos Journal '09," go to www.nationalreview.com/davosjournal09.

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to mediate anything. He denounces Israel's killing of civilians. Like Ban, he acknowledges no Hamas responsibility at all. To hear him tell it, Israel went back into Gaza (after withdrawing in 2005) for the simple and single-minded purpose of killing.

Beyond Gaza, he paints Israel as an oppressor, all around. Take the matter of border checkpoints. Why, he is prime minister of Turkey, and he and his wife still had to wait a half-hour at one such checkpoint. This is intolerable.

Amr Moussa is a perfect representative of the Arab old guard—a guard that liberals and reformers long to replace. And, from this Davos stage, he gives a speech—a rant—more suited to the "Arab street" than to a rarefied international conference. He talks about the "carnage" that Israel has inflicted on the Palestinian people, the Israeli "assault" on them, Israel's daily brutalization of them. He condemns the "military occupation" of which Israel is guilty. He gives no hint that, when the Israelis left Gaza in 2005, they left those Palestinians to self-government, something they had never been afforded.

He says that Israel starved and tormented Gazans, then asked them to be calm. "You starve them, you strangle them, and then you ask them to be quiet?" How can this be?

The world claims to believe in democracy, says Moussa, yet it refuses to give Palestinians their choice, namely Hamas. He even takes after Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas—unusual for the secretary general of the Arab League—saying that Abbas had had a full year's negotiation with the Israelis "and didn't bring anything." Moussa repeats this: Abbas "didn't bring anything" for his efforts, so why should people not turn to sterner elements?

It is very, very odd to hear the secretary general of the Arab League sounding like a spokesman for Hamas.

And he talks over and over about Israel's killing of women and children: as though Israeli forces had deliberately overlooked the men, in pursuit of women and children to gun down or burn up.

All of this time, Peres has just sat there. I think he must be a masochist to attend conferences like this, and place himself in situations like this. And will he deliver, here in Davos? There is a lot on his shoulders: the burden of speaking for Israel, and the truth of recent events. He is now 85 years old, and Davos's kind of Israeli, usually: the ultimate dove.

And here is what happens: Peres, the old Labour warrior—the old peace-processer—rises up magnificently, in maybe the most stunning and gratifying public performance I have ever witnessed.

He begins, "I heard them talking about Israel, but I couldn't recognize the country I know." He continues, "It's very difficult when a democracy has to contend with a terrorist group," bent on the democracy's destruction. Television loves to show pictures of suffering Palestinians, but it does not show pictures of Israeli mothers, as they sit with their children through a night of rocket attacks. Before the recent operation, Hamas rockets rained down on Israelis, at random. The government showed great forbearance. But eventually it had to act.

"What else could we do? People were

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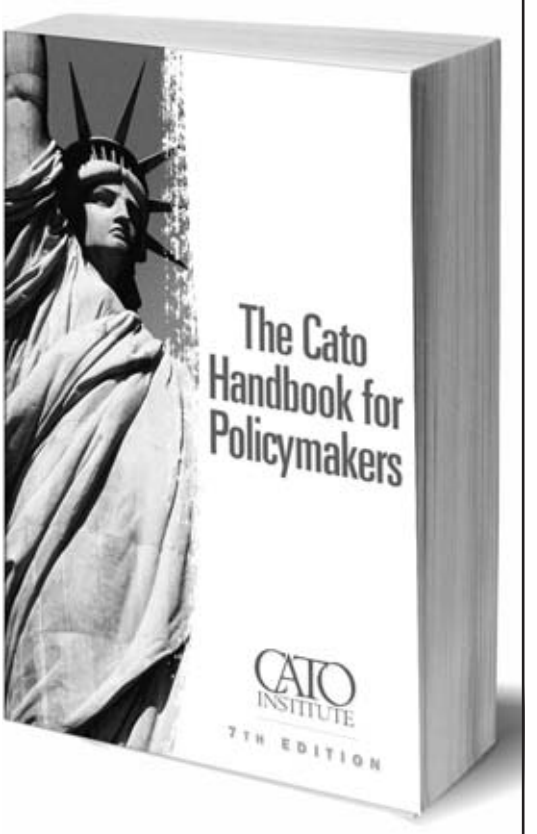

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coming to us and saying, 'Where are you? Why aren't you protecting us?' What else could we do? We had no choice."

Moussa has talked about the Palestinians and democracy. And "Hamas has a unique idea about democracy," says Peres: "You go through elections, and then you can start to shoot and kill and threaten. Democracy is not a matter of elections; it is a civilization."

Peres then reads Moussa, Erdogan, and all of us the Hamas charter: which calls for the murder of Jews, as a holy command. As he proceeds from that, Peres gets more and more emotional, shouting into the microphone, perhaps not realizing how loud his voice is in the hall. Passion—indignation, idealism, and some despair—pours out of him, as he defends his country and, in a way, his life.

He explains that Israel left Gaza "completely" in 2005, at considerable cost: It was not easy to convince the Israeli public of the wisdom of it. And Israel left infrastructure there, including new infrastructure—greenhouses, for example, meant specifically for Palestinians. And militants immediately destroyed this infrastructure. They also immediately began to attack what some call "Israel proper." There was no interest in building a state, or providing a decent life for Palestinians.

Despite the chaos, says Peres, "there was never a day of starvation in Gaza." The only items that Israel did not permit to be brought in were "rockets from Iran"—and Hamas built tunnels for those.

Peres reminds his audience that Israel made peace with Egypt and Jordan, the second those countries were willing. But Hamas has no such desire. And he has a special word for Erdogan, about checkpoints.

"I'm sorry you had to wait, but that is because many buses came in from the West Bank to Jerusalem full of dynamite. I was then prime minister, and I saw it with my own eyes: the blood, the bodies. And I had people"—Israelis—"screaming at me, 'Traitor!' and 'Why are you killing us?'" (because Peres had favored soft policies toward the Palestinians).

He says to Erdogan, yelling, "Mubarak accused Hamas, not us! He knows the situation not less than you." Peres is talking about responsibility for the Gaza conflict. "And President Abbas knows the situation not less than you—and he accused Hamas, not us!" By the way, what about Hamas's treatment of other Palestinians, their political opponents—whom they kneecap and torture and toss off buildings, "in broad daylight"?

Odd that it should fall to the Israeli president to defend Palestinian society.

He talks about the millions of dollars he has helped raise to care for sick Palestinian children, in Israel. He talks about his lifelong commitment to peace and reconciliation. And he is quite clear about the Hamas practice of placing its fighters and weapons in kindergartens, hospitals, etc. "They hide behind innocent families," Peres says. Israel placed 250,000 phone calls in 20 days to Palestinian civilians, pleading with them to evacuate, for Israel would shell Hamas. "What else could we do?"

Peres is visibly anguished at what Moussa has rightly called "carnage." And I think of something Golda Meir said, years ago: "We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children; we cannot forgive them for forcing us to kill their children."

Turning to Ban Ki-moon, Peres says, "I'm very sorry about the United Nations building"—but Hamas fighters had been shooting from there. And when NATO forces bombed Belgrade and hit the Chinese embassy, did they mean to, or want to? And did they mean or want to kill so many civilians in that operation?

Winding down, Peres says, "Israel does not need a ceasefire," a formal ceasefire, "because *we never started one bullet*. And the minute they stop shooting, there will be a ceasefire. We don't need anything else."

After this performance, Prime Minister Erdogan is prepared to speak again. He says, "President Peres, you are old, and your voice is loud out of a guilty conscience. When it comes to killing, you know very well how to kill. I know well how you hit and kill children on beaches." Erdogan wants more time to speak, but the moderator, Ignatius, says we are out. Erdogan stalks off the stage, saying, "Davos is over for me," not just for this year but for all time. Peres says to him, as Erdogan makes his exit, "What would you do if you were to have in Istanbul every night a hundred rockets?"

In short order, Erdogan will return to a hero's welcome in Istanbul, where people wave placards that read "Conqueror of Davos." The prime minister's wife, Emine, will declare, "Everything Peres said was a lie." But the opposite was true. Shimon Peres rose up to speak important truths, in an atmosphere that cried out for them. It was a great and stirring hour, probably impossible to forget. **NR**

Not Our Stars But Ourselves

Skinny actresses and models do not make girls anorexic

BY FRED SCHWARZ

WHAT causes anorexia nervosa, the terrible mental illness whose victims (mostly young women) starve themselves, sometimes to death? To many observers, the answer is clear: Hollywood, Madison Avenue, and Seventh Avenue. Film and television actresses are impossibly thin; advertisers hawk an endless profusion of diet products and banish average-looking people from their commercials; the fashion industry recruits tall, scrawny teenagers as its models and tosses them aside if they become too womanly. When girls and young women are constantly bombarded with thin-is-beautiful messages, is it any wonder that some of them overreact?

Christy Greenleaf, assistant professor of kinesiology, health promotion, and recreation at the University of North Texas, doesn't think so. She has written: "Girls and women, in our society, are socialized to value physical appearance and an ultra-thin beauty that rarely occurs naturally and to pursue that ultra-thin physique at any cost. Research demonstrates that poor body image and disordered eating attitudes are associated with internalizing the mediated (i.e., commodified, airbrushed) bodies that dominate the fashion industry." The narrative is a plausible one, and it fits a familiar template: Big business uses mass media to destroy consumers' health by creating harmful desires. Yet there are large parts of it that don't hold up.

In the first place, anorexia is not in any way an artifact of our modern, weight-obsessed society. Thomas Hobbes wrote about it in the 1680s. A 1987 study showed that anorexia in the United States increased throughout the 19th century and peaked around 1900, when chorus girls were voluptuous and the boyish flapper look was still two decades away. A similar historical pattern has been found for eating disorders in France.

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Some interplay of genetic and environmental factors may be at work in these cases, or they may have resulted from the common pattern in medicine of certain diagnoses' rising and falling in popularity. But it's clear that none of these outbreaks can be attributed to the late-20th- and early-21st-century emphasis on skinniness.

starvation all the way back to the early Christians and described the various explanations that were offered for it over the centuries (holiness, witchcraft, demonic possession, miracles, various nervous or emotional disturbances) before a newly scientific medical profession defined it as an illness in the mid-19th century.

anorexia in young adult females has tripled over the past 40 years. This is a case of the common phenomenon in which growing awareness of a condition leads to increased diagnosis of it, even when there is no real increase in its prevalence. Researchers who have carefully studied the data conclude that there has been no significant change in the rate of

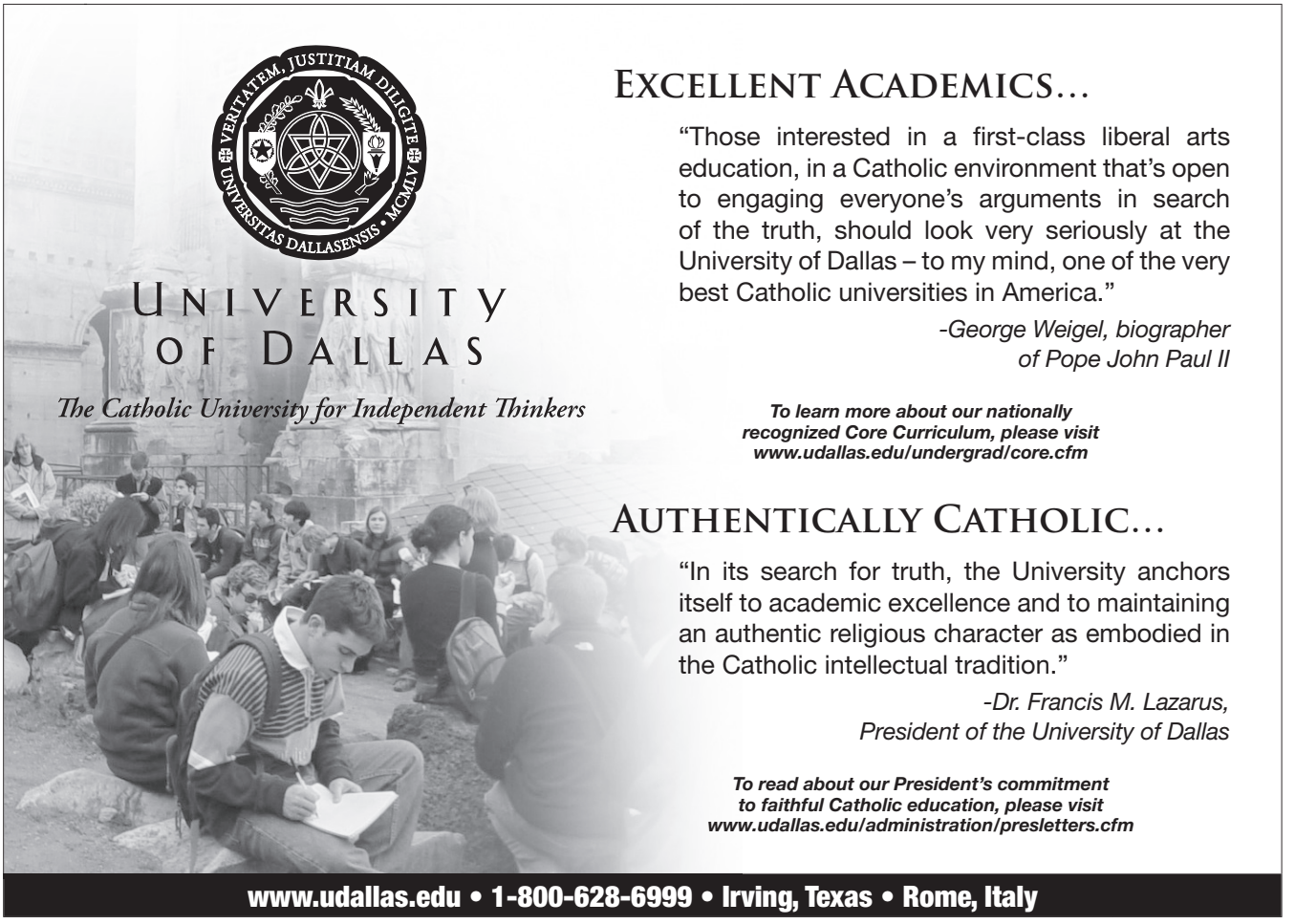
Researchers who have carefully studied the data conclude that there has been no significant change in the rate of anorexia in America since at least the mid-20th century.

There are plenty of other examples. The medical historian I. S. L. Loudon has identified chlorosis, the 19th-century "virgin's disease," with anorexia and shown that diagnoses of it reached "epidemic proportions" in Victorian England before disappearing completely between 1900 and 1920. A pair of Dutch historians have traced the practice of severe self-

All these statistics must be taken as rough indications only. Eating-disorder rates, like those for most psychiatric illnesses, are notoriously slippery, since the conditions are so hard to pin down. Journalists sometimes say that anorexia rates have been increasing for decades, as Americans' lives have become more media-saturated; one source reports that

anorexia in America since at least the mid-20th century.

Moreover, while it's tempting to blame America's appearance-obsessed culture for the plight of its self-starving daughters, anorexia is a global phenomenon. A 2001 article reviewed the extensive literature on eating disorders among residents of Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East,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and Australia. In some regions, the reported rates of anorexia were several times that of the United States (though, as above, such figures must be taken with caution). In a case of political correctness attacking itself, one researcher says those who attribute anorexia to media sexism are being ethnocentric: "The biomedical definition of anorexia nervosa emphasizes fat-phobia. . . . However, evidence exists that suggests anorexia nervosa can exist without the Western fear of fatness and that this culturally biased view of anorexia nervosa may obscure health care professionals' understanding of a patient's own cultural reasons for self-starvation."

If it isn't skinny models, what's the cause? In the last dozen years or so, scientists have linked anorexia to many different physiological conditions: high levels of estrogen in the womb; low levels of serotonin in the brain; a genetic mutation; overactivity by dopamine receptors; a general tendency toward anxiety and obsessionality; high age at menarche; elevated amounts of a mysterious peptide called CART; autism (which is underdiagnosed in girls, perhaps because it sometimes manifests itself in the form of eating disorders); premature birth or other birth complications; irregular activity in the insular cortex of the brain; post-traumatic stress disorder; an autoimmune disorder affecting the hypothalamus and pituitary gland; variations in the structure of the anterior ventral striatum (the brain region responsible for emotional responses); and even being born in June (seriously—one theory is that a winter-type disease in the mother at a certain vulnerable point during the pregnancy is responsible). Some of these causes may overlap with one another, but biomedical researchers are virtually unanimous that anorexia has physical roots, though the mechanism remains poorly understood.

Might these physiological factors be what makes one *susceptible* to anorexia, but cultural images are what sets it off? Walter Kaye, a psychiatry professor at UC–San Diego, has suggested such a mechanism: "Less than half of 1 percent of all women develop anorexia nervosa, which indicates to us that societal pressure alone isn't enough to cause someone to develop this disease. Our research has found that genes seem to play a substantial role in determining who is vulnerable to developing an eating disorder. However, the societal pressure isn't irrelevant; it may be the environmental trigger that releases a person's genetic risk."

Maybe, but probably not. As noted above, anorexia has flourished in many times and places with no mass media and no ideal of thinness. Anorexia could be just another manifestation of self-destructiveness, like slashing one's wrists. It could stem from some cause unrelated to body image, such as disgust with the processes of digestion and elimination (as well as menstruation, which often ceases in long-term anorexics). Psychiatrists believe that many anorexic women want to reverse the effects of puberty, such as breasts and hips, and while most of today's film and television sex symbols are indeed slender, they rarely lack for breasts and hips.

ROMAN GENN

Despite the uncertain connection, some observers still think the media need to change their act. Professor Greenleaf has suggested: "A potentially healthier approach is to include [in advertising] a variety of body shapes and sizes (as opposed to idealizing only one physique). Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes—and health is what should be valued, which may not fit with the fashion industry's emphasis on ultra-thin beauty."

The suggestion is not outlandish. Many advertisers and fashion magazines have, in fact, tried using "a variety of body shapes and sizes" among their models—once. It makes a decent publicity gimmick, but there's a reason they always go back to slender models: Clothes look better on them. (Also, it usually isn't practical to custom-sew garments for individual models, so clothing samples are made for a standard size 6.) And for some reason, viewers of films and television, male and female, tend to like beautiful actresses rather than healthy ones—not to mention the common observation that "the camera adds ten pounds."

If increasing the labor pool for models and actresses by including heftier ones yielded equally good results, the industries in question would have done it long ago. Why deal with a bunch of stuck-up teenagers if you don't have to? If media and fashion conglomerates really do dictate our image of the ideal female, why don't they manipulate us into going crazy for plumpish housewives instead? And even if it's true that media images make some people weight-conscious, the benefits must easily exceed the costs, since obesity is a much greater problem in America than anorexia.

Nonetheless, some lawmakers are calling for bans on skinny models. Madrid and Milan have prohibited those with a body-mass index lower than 18 from their fashion shows. (Body-mass index is the weight in kilograms divided by the square of the height in meters. A BMI of 18 is considered the low end of the normal range, but you wouldn't expect models as a group to have "normal" physiques, any more than you would expect it from football players.) Similar bans have been proposed in Quebec, London, New York City, New York State, and France's national assembly. The main goal of these bills, which began to be introduced after several models starved themselves to death, is supposedly to reduce anorexia within the industry, though proponents always invoke the baleful effects that waif-like models have on society as a whole. Yet this assumes that self-starvation is a willful choice that anorexics will abandon if given the proper incentive, when in fact it is a mental illness that for centuries has proven stubbornly impervious to rational arguments.

Anorexia is a dreadful disease, and still poorly understood. If the growing scientific knowledge about it can be pieced together, we may eventually learn to identify, prevent, treat, and possibly cure it. But political activists do not help its sufferers when they oversimplify a complicated condition and blame it on their stock assortment of evil forces in American society. **NR**

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Our LINCOLN

Obama, he was not

BY ALLEN C. GUELZO

"WHAT is conservatism?"

This question has been getting more than its usual share of raking over in the post-Bush beginnings of 2009. But it was being asked in terms just as blunt 150 years ago, and the man asking the question was Abraham Lincoln.

Fresh from his near-victory over Stephen Douglas for a U.S. Senate seat from Illinois, and soon to deliver a headline-grabbing speech at New York City's Cooper Union, Lincoln posed the question to a political rally in Leavenworth, Kan., in December 1859.

In the broadest sense, said Lincoln, conservatism meant "preserving the old against the new." In the American context, it meant holding the Union together—a determination to "stick to, contend for" the Constitution as "adopted by our fathers who framed the government under which we live." And in the supercharged atmosphere of the late 1850s, with the slaveholding states of the South threatening to break up the Constitution and the Union, conservatism meant nominating for president "a national conservative man, unhackneyed by political tergiversations and . . . fresh from the people." Such a conservative president would have not only to think conservatively, but to act conservatively. Despite his deep opposition to the spread of slavery in the United States, Lincoln was not "in favor of the exercise of" presidential power against it "unless upon some conservative principle."

Still, Lincoln knew his conservatism would be misrepresented—or simply ignored—by a press eager to paint him as an

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extremist. "If I were to labor a month, I could not express my conservative views and intentions more clearly and strongly, than they are expressed," Lincoln wrote irritably to the editor of the *Louisville Journal* a week before his election as president. "And yet even you, who do occasionally speak of me in terms of personal kindness, give no prominence to these oft repeated expressions of conservative views and intentions."

Lincoln would probably be just as irritated to see how routinely those "oft repeated expressions of conservative views and intentions" are still being given "no prominence" on his 200th birthday. On February 12, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, whose board of directors is top-heavy with Democratic politicos, will sponsor a "National Teach-In" on Lincoln—featuring three liberal Democrats. The Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia will host a banquet that evening whose main speaker will be George McGovern. And a companion volume to the Library of Congress's new Lincoln exhibition features commentaries on famous Lincoln documents by Toni Morrison, Jimmy Carter, Gore Vidal, Mario Cuomo, Tony Kushner, Sen. Dick Durbin, Bill Clinton, and Ken Burns (as well as Lew Lehrman, William Safire, George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush, and Newt Gingrich, but the liberals easily outnumber the conservatives).

Not surprisingly, Lincoln's declaration in Columbus, Ohio, in September 1859—that the "chief and real purpose of the Republican party is eminently conservative" and "proposes nothing save and except to restore this government to its original tone . . . and there to maintain it, looking for no further change . . . than that which the original framers of the government themselves expected and looked forward to"—is not one of the book's featured documents.

Still, if Lincoln's bicentennial laurels are not being plucked from conservative trees, this is not through any fault of Lincoln's. From his earliest political stirrings in the 1830s, Lincoln was a torchbearer for free markets, individual liberty and economic mobility, the rule of law, natural rights, and prudence in governing. He had no Caesarian notion of the powers of the presidency, no use for what we today call "diversity" politics. Yet he achieved the presidency in 1861, just in time to find himself facing a national crisis that changed all the ground rules by which he expected to put those ideas into play.

At the core of Lincoln's conservatism was the Declaration of Independence. He said he had "never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence," and he gave short shrift to the agrarian or aristocratic Toryism of the Calhoun or Metternich school. In particular, he regarded Jefferson's key sentence—"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"—as the "proposition" to which the American republic had been "dedicated" at its birth.

This was not a proposition confected only by Americans for the unique circumstances of America; *created equal* was a statement of natural law, "applicable to all men and all times." If asked to surrender or compromise that proposition, Lincoln said with eerie prescience shortly before his inauguration in 1861, he would prefer to "be assassinated on this spot." At the same time, though, the proposition owed nothing to the Jacobin spirit of radical egalitarianism. Lincoln's notion of equality was about leveling up, not whittling down.

EQUALITY meant abolishing artificial aristocratic privilege and opening up the starting line in life to everyone, regardless of who his parents were, what his religion was, or what his race happened to be. The promise embodied by the Declaration was "that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance." When the Civil War came, he interpreted it as "a struggle for maintaining in the world, that form, and substance of government, whose leading object is, to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders—to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all—to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life."

The practical purpose of equality was twofold: to create an equal voice for all the governed in their government, and to create an environment, social and economic, in which self-improvement and social mobility could operate freely. "Advancement," Lincoln declared, "improvement in condition—is the order of things in a society of equals." Legalizing slavery represented an unnatural intervention of government into the marketplace, conferring unfair labor advantages on white slaveowners at the expense of black slaves and poor white farmers alike. The slave had the product of his labor stolen out of his hands; the farmer could not stand up economically to the vast economies of scale enjoyed by the thousand-bale planters. "Advancement" and "improvement" for both evaporated.

Lincoln's best example of advancement was himself. "Twenty-five years ago, I was a hired laborer," Lincoln said in March 1860. He was little better than "a slave." But in the unbound atmosphere of "a society of equals," he had made himself free—"so free that they let me practice law." And so it was for everyone else in "a society of equals." Equality was the friend of talent, and the enemy of entitlement.

Lincoln understood that equality of opportunity was not a guarantee of "fairness" of result. "Some will get wealthy," he conceded, but that was no excuse for class complaint or class warfare. "I don't believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich; it would do more harm than good." His theory of the ideal economy was one where "the prudent, penniless beginner in the world, labors for wages awhile, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land, for himself; then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him." He never blamed poverty on an unfeeling capitalist machine, nor, for that matter, did he try to wear the poverty of his youth as a badge of pride.

His father, Thomas Lincoln, was an ignorant farmer who (according to one semi-literate neighbor) "Jest Raised a Nuf for his own use" and shunned participation in the newly emerging market economy of the 19th century for anything more than "his Shugar and Coffee and Such Like." Abraham Lincoln, however, was initiated into the world of cash markets on the day two men hurriedly hired the boy to take them on his raft midstream into the Ohio River to catch a passing steamer. Each man tossed him "a silver half-dollar," and while this might seem "like a trifle," Lincoln thought "it was a most important incident in my life." He had learned how labor could be converted into capital. "The world seemed wider and fairer before me," he recalled, "I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that time."

Lincoln had hardly turned 21 when he bid the farm—and "the backside of the world"—goodbye. He turned to the larger world of commerce, going into business first as a clerk and then as a proprietor in two stores in New Salem, the up-and-coming *entrepôt*

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of central Illinois. He failed, as did New Salem. But without much pause, Lincoln plunged himself into the study of law, which (in the memorable phrase of Charles Grier Sellers) enlisted him among "the shock troops of capitalism." From the time he was admitted to the central-Illinois bar in 1837 until he became president in 1861, Lincoln managed a sprawling legal practice—some 5,600 cases and over a hundred thousand documents. Only 194 of them were criminal cases; the bulk of his practice was civil and commercial, most of it involving debt collections, bankruptcies, and land disputes. By the 1850s, his most frequent and lucrative clients were the Illinois railroads. He did not at all mind foreclosing delinquent mortgages or writing lengthy opinions for the Illinois Central Railroad on how to evict squatters from railroad land. As Henry Clay Whitney, another central-Illinois lawyer, admitted, "I never found him unwilling to appear in behalf of a great 'soulless corporation.'"

Having built himself up from being "a strange, friendless, uneducated, penniless boy, working on a flat boat," Lincoln had no desire "to propose any war upon capital." If anything, he said, he wanted "to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else" and "leave each man free to acquire property as fast as he can." Lincoln had little sympathy for those who complained that the competitive workings of a market economy were impersonal or greedy. "Free labor"—a man's right to choose his own work, take risks, and reap the rewards, benefiting the community along with himself—was actually "the just and generous, and prosperous system, which opens the way for all—gives hope to all, and energy, and progress, and improvement of condition to all." When people failed in their "chance" to rise, "it is not the fault of the system, but because of either a dependent nature which prefers it, or improvidence, folly, or singular misfortune."

Lincoln had no desire 'to propose any war upon capital.' If anything, he wanted 'to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else.'

In case of such a failure, the only solution—apart from calling in the forces of privilege and favoritism to put an end to equality—was to allow a free market to correct itself or allow an unsuccessful striver the freedom to make a second try. "Some of you will be successful," he told the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society in 1859; "others will be disappointed, and will be in a less happy mood." For them, Lincoln's only advice was "the maxim, 'Better luck next time'; and then, by renewed exertion, make that better luck for themselves." When he was asked by a young schoolteacher for advice about studying law, he wrote back, "obtaining a thorough knowledge of the law . . . is very simple, though laborious, and tedious. . . . Work, work, work, is the main thing."

But the promise of self-improvement was only one corollary of equality, and it might turn out to be empty unless it was accompanied by equal liberty and an equal voice for all the governed in their government. For this reason, it was the hooting shame of America that while it talked of equality and free labor, it legalized the enslavement and dehumanization of blacks. "When one starts poor, as most do in the race of life, free society is such that he knows he can better his condition," Lincoln argued; "he knows that there is no fixed condition of labor, for his whole life." But slavery fixed an entire category of human beings in precisely that hopeless situation, politically and economically, on no basis other than color. For that reason alone, Lincoln was "naturally anti slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."

As the "one retrograde institution in America," slavery turned Americans into "political hypocrites before the world." Just as bad, by allowing one man to own the fruits of another man's labor, it discouraged hard work in both. In this way, slavery was turning labor from the path of self-improvement into the lot of the debased and dispirited. The ownership of slaves "betokened not only the possession of wealth but indicated the gentleman of leisure who was above and scorned labour," and only encouraged the "giddy headed young men who looked upon work as vulgar and ungentlemanly."

Above all, however, slavery was a violation of natural law, because a man's right to "eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns" was indissolubly linked with the natural right to liberty that Jefferson had recognized in every human creature (and that made Jefferson uneasy about the slaves he himself owned). Anyone who stopped his ears and tried to pretend that blacks were excluded from that natural right was "blowing out the moral lights around us . . . and eradicating the light of reason and the love of liberty in this American people."

Slavery's defenders made the pretense of blacks' exclusion easier to maintain by manipulating the language of liberty to their own ends. Liberty became the "right" to own slaves. Slaves became "property" to be defended, as though human chattels were no different from donkeys or pigs. And the decision of any majority on any subject—including who might be the best candidates for enslavement—was construed as the essence of democracy. "The doctrine of self government is right—absolutely and eternally right," Lincoln said. But "if the negro is a man, is it not to that extent, a total destruction of self government, to say that he too shall not govern himself?" There was a line that even the power of majorities could not cross, a line drawn by nature and nature's God that no amount of talk about "choice" could ever really efface.

SLAVERY had to be dealt with, but within the constraints of the Constitution and the rule of law. Americans must be "ever true to Liberty," but also true to "the Union, and the Constitution—true to Liberty, not selfishly, but upon principle—not for special classes of men, but for all men, true to the union and the Constitution, as the best means to advance that liberty."

His belief in the 1850s was that the "best means" to ensure the demise of slavery was to confine it to the southern states, where it

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had long been legal, and prevent its spread into the western territories. Locked into the South, slavery would eventually asphyxiate, as slave-based cotton agriculture used up the resources of the southern soils. Even then, the emancipation of the slaves would have to involve "three main features—gradual—compensation—and vote of the people" in order to ensure its political legitimacy and provide time to create "some practical system by which the two races could gradually live themselves out of their old relation to each other, and both come out better prepared for the new."

A civil war was not part of Lincoln's list of possible solutions to the slavery controversy. But civil war was thrust upon him, and the war put into his hands, as commander-in-chief. Yet even the presidential war powers, which he used to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, had to be handled with restraint. When his cabinet urged him to expand the scope of the Proclamation, he demurred: If he based emancipation on anything except the "military necessity" that his war powers authorized, "would I not thus give up all footing upon constitution or law? Would I not thus be in the boundless field of absolutism?" He never saw himself as a crusader, licensed to strike down injustice with a righteous flail. When George Hay Stuart of the U.S. Christian Commission congratulated Lincoln on the abolition of slavery, wrote an early biographer, "Mr. Lincoln replied in a few, short clear words, 'My Friends: you owe me no gratitude for what I have done. . . . I trust that this has all been for us a work of *duty*.'"

For all the complaining about Lincoln's exercise of the war powers and his suspension of habeas corpus, the actual volume of military arrests and trials was small. And for all the complaining that Lincoln used the war to expand the powers of the federal government to an unconstitutional degree, the expansion was never more than a utilitarian device for meeting the unprecedented demands of 19th-century war-making. (The federal government began shrinking back to only 4 percent of its wartime peak within days of the news of Appomattox.) The massive federal bureaucracy that so antagonizes conservatives today was the creation of the 20th century—and especially of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson—not of Abraham Lincoln. The notion of "affirmative action," of nationalized health care, of "comparable worth" litigation and the wholesale release of terrorist detainees would have reduced him to splutters.

If to love liberty, to hate slavery, and to believe that free labor holds out the best hope of "self-improvement" and "advancement" do *not* exemplify what American conservatism ought to be, then I am at a loss to know what does. Nor can I imagine what would offer better proof of Lincoln's conservative credentials than his advocacy of procedural equality, freedom, and an open society. What I do know is that the same voices that twisted liberty into "choice" and clamored for privilege and security rather than openness and mobility have not changed all that much since they were raised in defense of slavery.

The politics of race and blood, and the culture of hedonism and the unbridled personal will, serve inevitably to plant "the seeds of despotism around your own doors." For Lincoln, moral principle, as captured in the Declaration of Independence and in natural law, is all, or almost all, that unites us, and all that ensures that *this nation under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*

If those words were his only banner, they would still be enough to show that he is yet our Lincoln. **NR**

AT WHAT Cost?

Conservatives should rethink their opposition to 'comprehensive' immigration reform

BY RICHARD NADLER

CONSERVATIVES should stop trying to remove 12 million illegal aliens from American soil, either by rounding them up or by inducing them to "self-deport." In the Southwest, the West, the Northeast, and Florida, attempts to remove illegals have diminished the conservative movement, transforming a governing majority into a structural minority. To continue the effort will damage the conservative cause even more among Hispanics and entrepreneurs.

To understand why, consider the three permanent interests involved in immigration.

The first interest is border security. Today, a border jumper entering the U.S. from Mexico has a two-in-three chance of remaining here. An uncontrolled border is a potential target for terrorists, and a sure target for criminals. Many interpret our porous border as a degradation of national sovereignty. Others regard a free market in cross-border labor as an economic liability, driving down American wages.

The second interest centers on employment demands. Business groups representing seasonal and low-cost labor regard access to foreign workers as an economic necessity and an overall economic boon. Today, roughly 5 percent of American employees—7 million—are "undocumented." In particular sectors, notably agriculture, construction, cleaning, and food services, the undocumented share of the labor force exceeds 10 percent.

Finally, a variety of groups lobby for immigrant rights. They demand legal status for most of America's 12 million illegal residents. The public faces of this interest are the left-leaning Hispanic and civil-rights organizations. But advocates for illegals include millions more: their friends, families, co-workers, and clergy, plus a substantial majority of legal Hispanic residents. Roughly 80 percent of the undocumented are Hispanic.

These interests are permanent, and formidable. "Comprehensive" immigration reform was premised on the assumption that any major legislative attempt to satisfy one of these interests must address all three. In 2006, and again in 2007, the Bush administration championed a version of comprehensive reform; Senate Republicans blocked it. Opponents, primarily conservatives, insisted that immigration reform address border security first or exclusively.

Partisans of cross-border labor and immigrant rights reciprocated in kind, rejecting full-spectrum conservative candidates who opposed comprehensive immigration reform in favor of full-

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spectrum liberals who supported it. In 2008, advocates of comprehensive immigration reform gained, on net, at least 14 partisans in the House and four in the Senate. All are Democrats.

It wasn't always this way. In 2004, roughly 40 percent of Hispanic voters cast their ballots for George W. Bush. Hispanic opinion patterns mirrored those of low-income working-class voters nationwide: liberal on economics, but with powerful conservative cross-trends on social issues and entrepreneurship.

For instance, the CNN exit poll concerning Proposition 8—the California Marriage Protection Act—found that Hispanics (along with blacks) provided the slender majority by which the measure passed. A Pew Hispanic Center poll of over 4,000 Hispanics reported that 57 percent "say abortion should be illegal," compared with 42 percent of non-Hispanic whites. An Americas Majority poll found 81 percent of Hispanics supportive of school choice.

With or without comprehensive immigration reform, Hispanics are the fastest-growing component of the evangelical movement, due to both immigration and higher-than-average fertility. Hispanics will, within a single generation, compose a majority of American Catholics.

According to the massive 2004 and 2008 Edison-Mitofsky exit polls, between the two elections, Republicans lost and Democrats gained 13 percent of the Hispanic vote in the presidential race and 15 percent in House races. Some analysts contend that immigration cannot explain this radical shift in the GOP's Hispanic vote share. Others maintain that no radical shift has occurred. And some, like Prof. James Gimpel of the Center for Immigration Studies, claim both. In his paper "Latino Voting in the 2008 Election," he says that "Latino voters just aren't that different from other voters in the national electorate" and that "no evidence . . . indicts immigration policy as the reason for Republicans' poor showing."

The evidence Professor Gimpel presents contradicts his conclusion. The Edison-Mitofsky national House polls show Hispanic support for GOP congressional candidates declining at triple the rate of the GOP's general decline (5 percent). Regarding immigration policy: In *Border Wars: The Impact of Immigration on the Latino Vote*, I measured precinct-level variations in the Hispanic vote when a Republican who favored comprehensive immigration reform in one cycle was succeeded by an "enforcement only" candidate in the next. I cannot claim that immigration policy alone caused the steep attrition of GOP vote share recorded in that study. But I can state that the votes trended steeply away from restrictionists in hundreds of heavily Hispanic precincts.

The disconnect between religious faith and partisan loyalty that exists among blacks is well documented. In California, the same black electorate that voted for the Marriage Protection Amendment by better than two-thirds supported the candidacies of amendment opponents by better than nine-tenths. If Hispanics stop voting as other working-class Americans do and think of themselves instead as a persecuted, government-dependent minority, the social influence of the Right will wither on the vine.

Conservatives have been obtuse to the depth of Hispanic resistance to the removal of illegals. Roughly 30 million resident Hispanics are American citizens—triple the number of Hispanic illegals. Eleven million Hispanics voted in 2008, a 38 percent increase from 2004. Among adult Hispanic *citizens*, the Pew Hispanic Center records that 41 percent fear a deportation action against a friend or family member. Roughly one Hispanic in four participated in a demonstration or rally in behalf of immigrants over the past year.

In America today, 6.6 million households contain at least one illegal immigrant. Residing within those households are 4.9 million children and 3.5 million U.S. citizens. Conservatives who present themselves to Hispanics as pro-family had better reflect on this. Two centuries of unguarded borders will not be resolved by instituting "real ID" as a basis for mass removals.

The fear and the fury engendered in the broader Hispanic community by conservative efforts to remove illegals has destroyed conservative prospects in the Southwest, weakened them in the West, and wiped them out in New England.

THE dimensions of the disaster in the Southwest are easy to outline. Arizona is 30 percent Hispanic; California, 36 percent; Texas, 36 percent; New Mexico, 44 percent. In 2004, Republicans controlled four of the nine House districts on the U.S.–Mexican border, and George W. Bush defeated John Kerry in five of them. That year, all four Republican incumbents supported comprehensive immigration reform. In 2006, two Republicans ran on "enforcement only," and both lost. In 2008, two veteran border Republicans vacated their seats. The GOP ran two "enforcement" candidates. Pro-reform Democrats defeated them both.

In one sense, nothing changed. In both 2004 and 2008, all nine congressmen on the border supported comprehensive immigration reform. What has changed is that all nine now are liberal Democrats.

Since 2004, Republicans lost two Senate seats and two House districts in Colorado (20 percent Hispanic), and a single House seat each in Idaho and Nevada (10 percent and 25 percent Hispanic respectively).

In the New England, Democrats not only maintained their 2006 gains in Connecticut and New Hampshire, they unseated the one GOP congressman left standing, immigration hardliner Chris Shays. Jim Himes, a Peruvian-born banker and an open advocate of comprehensive immigration reform, won the seat. The district is 12.3 percent Hispanic.

Larry Sabato, who heads the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia, flagged 90 House districts as competitive in 2008. A post-election demographic analysis of those races reveals a stark pattern as to who won where. The median Hispanic population of districts in which "enforcement only" advocates won was 2.3 percent. The median Hispanic population of districts in which immigration-reform advocates won was 12.1 percent.

The implications are clear. Opponents of comprehensive immigration reform are sitting on a demographic time bomb—or rather, on a series of explosions, triggered by the ordinary migrations of Hispanic citizens, who already are 15.1 percent of the population. If immigration reform is the evil that "enforcement only" partisans claim it to be, they will need not one fence bordering Mexico, but multiple barriers to partition California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Colorado, Florida, New York, and New Jersey from the rest of the nation.

The ballyhooed success of conservatives in blocking comprehensive immigration reform in 2007 was in fact a holding action. With superhuman effort, conservatives stopped the bill. But they lacked the votes to pass robust enforcement-only legislation, such as Heath Shuler's "SAVE" Act or Jim Sensenbrenner's Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act.

Conservative focus shifted gradually to the states, where enforcement advocates could, at some times and in some places,

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enact legislation requiring stringent employee verification and harsh sanctions against non-compliant employers. Conservatives assumed the law would compel illegals' bosses to become deportation cops. This proved false.

Underlying business outrage at conservative immigration policy was a simple fact: The overwhelming majority of illegal hires had been, procedurally speaking, legally hired. Employers resisted mandates to revisit the immigration status of employees in whom they had invested time and training.

The I-9 system, operative for the past generation, requires an employer to accept certain combinations of several dozen forms of identification. The list includes foreign passports, school report cards, student ID cards, and hospital records. Employers who refuse to accept such shabby documentation as evidence of employment eligibility are warned, on the form itself, "It is illegal to discriminate against work eligible individuals. Employers CANNOT specify which document(s) they will accept from an employee. The refusal to hire an individual because the documents presented have a future expiration date may also constitute illegal discrimination."

Few conservatives foresaw how employers would react to the replacement of this weak federal standard with a patchwork regime of conflicting state and local immigration-enforcement statutes. The new enforcement laws in Illinois, Tennessee, Louisiana, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Arizona, and elsewhere presented employers—particularly those based in multiple states—with a whole new set of headaches. Compliance with the rickety I-9 system had provided employers a "safe harbor"; so long as they followed procedure, they were immune to legal action when hires turned out to be unlawful. But now, business owners faced conflicting lists of acceptable ID documents, electronic-verification mandates, appeals procedures, penalties, and causes of action. The safety of the I-9 had disappeared, not into a new harbor, but into a whirlpool of liability.

Business rebelled. All across the nation, associations of restaurateurs, landscapers, farmers, ranchers, heavy constructors, hoteliers, food-service operators, home builders, and high-tech entrepreneurs locked horns in lawsuits against employer-sanction laws and their conservative sponsors. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and dozens of state chambers joined the litigation, asserting that employer-sanction laws violated the U.S. Constitution's commerce clause.

The face-off between conservatives and business did not end at the courthouse steps. In 2008, the average Democratic candidate burnished his business credentials by supporting guest-worker programs, the average GOP candidate ran on "enforcement only," and business contributions shifted away from conservatives and Republicans. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, the GOP share of political contributions from each of the following declined by 5 to 14 percent between 2006 and 2008: tourism groups, farm groups, poultry producers, food-and-beverage associations, general contractors, home builders, and computer and Internet companies. A comparable increase in contributions to Democrats matched each of these sector declines.

Conservatives traditionally self-identify as guarantors of free enterprise. We hardly noticed that entrepreneurs believed us less, or not at all. But if we weren't willing to listen to them, we might at least have listened to ourselves. The theory that low-wage work is a net drain on social well-being originated with Marxists, not conservatives. Market economists taught that the freer the market for labor, the more efficient its use. Farmers realized that their export markets abroad required seasonal workers at home. Municipal leaders understood that contemporary urban renewal was built on immigrant hospitality services and entrepreneurship. Practical men of business knew that the availability of low-wage labor in the United States prevented the export of higher value-added tasks in an international workplace.

The notion of judging a sector of labor, native or immigrant, primarily on its net generation of taxes—rather than on its contributions to the economy more broadly—would never have entered a free marketer's mind.

But by the middle of 2007, such thinking had infested the mainstream of the conservative discourse. Talk radio, conservative bloggers, and even hoary think tanks Rushed (so to speak) to unearth crises associated with low-wage labor in general and illegal-immigrant labor in particular. Illegals were responsible for lowering median income and for raising unemployment among the poor. Illegals were responsible for a crime wave, a health-care crisis, and an education-funding deficit. Immigrants were swelling poverty rates and welfare rolls.

These accusations are inconsistent with much of the evidence. In my paper "Immigration and the Wealth of States," I compared high- and low-immigration states in terms of income growth, unemployment rates, welfare eligibility, and crime during the great immigration rush of the Bush years. Trends in all these categories were better in high-immigration states—but they were best where immigration growth had been most rapid. This does not mean that an immigrant influx caused prosperity in and of itself. But the data from high-immigration states reinforces the contention of laissez-faire advocates that a free market in labor increases both the range and the availability of goods and services.

In the last several cycles, Republican enemies of immigration reform took a shellacking. The defeated champions of the restrictionist cause in 2008 included incumbents Virgil Goode, Thelma Drake, Steve Chabot, Bill Sali, Ric Keller, Tom Feeney, Marilyn Musgrave, and Jeb Bradley, attempted successor to a Republican Jim Oberweis, and challenger Lou Barletta. Save for Barletta's, all of these defeats occurred in historically Republican districts. Lost are their votes not just on immigration, but on right-to-life, school reform, tax cuts, budget restraint, military readiness, and, yes, border security.

Considered as conservative policy, any immigration reform that would effect the removal of 12 million illegals is incongruous. How does it improve national security to hold up legislation that includes needed border reforms, in the hopes that an "enforcement only" package may one day come around? How does it help the economy to break 7 million labor agreements, depriving businesses of seasonal and low-wage workers? How does it advance a right-to-life agenda to antagonize the nation's foremost pro-life ethnicity (Hispanics) and largest pro-life institution (the Catholic church)?

At some point, conservatives must reflect on how many allies, and how many issues, we are willing to sacrifice in a fey and futile attempt to get field workers, busboys, and nannies out of the country. The steady drumbeat of restrictionist defeat invites—no, requires—conservatives to revisit a concept we have glibly reviled: comprehensive immigration reform. The relevant question is no longer whether we want it, but what we want from it: what forms of border security, crime control, and employment verification. Every hour we postpone a border reform that respects the interests of employers and Hispanics, our entire agenda suffers. **NR**

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Israel's Defensive Response to Gaza

Was Israel using "disproportionate force?"

Having absorbed over 10,000 rockets aimed at its towns and cities and having issued innumerable warnings, Israel finally decided to defend its citizens. It bombarded Gaza by air and by sea and ultimately invaded it. The "world community" is concerned and enraged about Israel's having used "disproportionate force" in its response. Is that a valid complaint?

What are the facts?

Some History: In order to understand what is happening, some historical review is in order. Israel captured Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip in June 1967, in a defensive war against three Arab states. Since then, Israel signed peace treaties with Egypt and with Jordan. It has returned the vast Sinai to Egypt. Attempts at peace with Syria have been unsuccessful so far. Although there have been many attempts to make peace with the Palestinians, Israel's most immediate neighbors, that has until now proven to be elusive. There have been any number of "interim" agreements, but a final peace agreement covering all aspects and all demands has not yet been reached.

"Before [peace can be attained] terrorist Hamas must be totally eliminated."

With the concurrence and support of the US and of Israel, the Palestinians installed a Palestinian Authority (PA) to represent and to govern them. In order to move the peace process forward, former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon decided to unilaterally disengage from Gaza. It was a very difficult and wrenching decision because 9,000 Israeli citizens who had been living there for generations had to be evacuated. Twenty-one communities had to be dismantled. Since then, there is absolutely no Israeli presence – civil or military – in Gaza.

In June 2007, Hamas wrested control over the Gaza Strip from the PA in bloody fighting. Hamas, classified as a terror organization by the United States and by most civilized nations, is openly dedicated to the destruction of Israel and for "carrying the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine." Immediately after seizing power, Hamas began to fire rockets into Israel. It is estimated that so far close to 10,000 rockets have been launched, 3,000 alone in 2008. Even one rocket would be considered an act of war by any country. Constant barrages of rockets on Israel by Hamas are obviously intolerable. If a neighboring country would fire rockets against our cities we would respond with massive force. And that is exactly what Israel is doing.

Was Israel's Response Disproportionate? Article 51 of the UN Charter is quite clear that any nation has the right to engage in self-defense against armed attack. The response has indeed to satisfy the principle of proportionality. But it is not correct to claim that Israel has violated that principle by killing more Hamas terrorists than the number of Israelis killed by Hamas rockets. There is no legal equivalence between the deliberate killing of civilians, which is what Hamas is doing by lobbing its rockets into Israeli cities without strategic significance, and the targeted killing of Hamas militants. The law is clear that any number of combatants can be killed to prevent the killing of even one innocent civilian.

In its air and ground operations against Gaza Israel went to unprecedented lengths to avoid killing civilians. In an area such as Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas in the world – and in view of Hamas's custom of locating its rocket launchers and other military installations in the middle of residential areas and even in mosques, using civilians as shields – that becomes particularly difficult. In what is certainly unique in the history of warfare, Israel, in its respect for human rights, dropped tens of thousands of leaflets over Gaza and placed telephone calls to warn residents of non-military installations to get out of the way of military action. The accusation that Israel is using "disproportionate force" is absurd.

What were Israel's war aims? The "world" most insistently demanded that an immediate cease fire be arranged. Remarkably, that same "world" did not utter a word or lift a finger when thousands of rockets fell on Israel. Israel cannot be expected to terminate its defensive action in Gaza until a comprehensive solution to the crisis can be reached. One can only surmise what Israel war aims were, but in all likelyhood, at the very minimum the following: • Full dismantling of all military power of Hamas, including destruction of stockpiles of rockets and other weapons. • Increased Egyptian supervision of the border crossings between Gaza and Egypt. • Return of kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

Israel cannot possibly conclude a peace agreement with those who are sworn to destroy it and continue on that path. The PA, though still nursing impossible dreams of the division of Jerusalem and the "return" of the 1948 refugees, is amenable to diplomacy and can be dealt with. Final solutions have so far been unavailable, but there is indeed hope for ultimate success. The US government will wish to play a positive role in that. But before that, terrorist Hamas must be totally eliminated. That is the principle and the main goal of Israel's action against Gaza.

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Factory MAN

Nostalgia is wonderful. It won't solve our problems

BY JIM MANZI

I STILL remember the first time I walked into a working factory. In the foreground, innumerable machines whirred and clacked away in precise, interlocking dances. A massive vat shaped like a 50-foot-tall Campbell's soup can loomed in the background. It was encased in a protective sheath of refractory bricks that glowed dusky pink with trapped heat. A crane arm dumped heavy sand continuously into the top at (literally) industrial volumes. Steaming, liquid glass gushed out of the business end at the bottom in a matching stream. I couldn't see the heating element, but it was in there somewhere, and it was working.

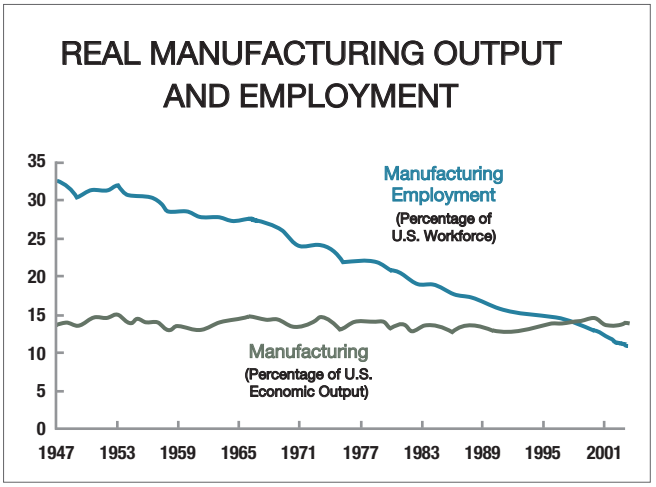
It's embarrassing to admit this, but at that moment I felt the way I was always told I was supposed to feel when I saw a mountain range. I laughed involuntarily, and then had a thought that I never could have had about a mountain: Men made this. I was looking at concretized human ingenuity. In the auto industry, "car guy" is a slang term for an executive who doesn't just view the business of a car company as making money, but loves the cars themselves. I'm a factory guy.

I spent the first few years of my career in the 1980s as one small part of a self-conscious movement to rescue American manufacturing from its projected obsolescence. I've worked in glass plants, assembly plants, oil refineries, and textile plants from Florida to Canada, and many points in between. I've carried a union card and walked a picket line. I loved being in the plant, and using the old-fashioned accounting term "burden" for head-office costs. I enjoyed making fun of the guys working in finance in New York.

Reform of manufacturing was focused on the need to change business practices. There was no one huge insight; it was painstaking effort conducted one work-rules negotiation, quality-improvement session, and production-planning algorithm at a time. As a general rule, people resist change in business. There are good reasons for this: It is easy to theorize about improvements, but the law of unintended consequences applies to all complicated organizations, not just governments. But there are also less-good reasons for it: predominantly, that change is hard, human beings are lazy, and it's hard to get incentives aligned properly so that the necessary people are willing to act.

The power of capital markets to force change was revealed to me when a large manufacturing company where I was consulting was confronted by a leveraged-buyout offer. The financial wolf was at the door, and I was placed on a small team tasked with figuring out the changes that would have to be made to meet the new financial targets and avoid losing the company to the raiders. Suddenly, in the face of crisis, much of the previous resistance melted away. In the end, the company did pretty much what the buyout group would have done. It was sloppy and painful, but the company emerged healthier and growing. It turns out those finance guys in New York were doing something important to prevent the decline of American manufacturing into mediocrity and irrelevance after all.

Repeated application of the process of financial pressure followed by operational response has paid off. The U.S. has a very productive manufacturing sector. It just looks much different from what most of us imagined it would be. One of the most important differences is that it doesn't employ many more people than it did in 1947. Here is a chart produced by the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland that summarizes the situation:



SOURCE: BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS; BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

At the end of World War II, manufacturing accounted for about one-third of the U.S. workforce. Today it is about one-tenth. In terms of employment, we are no longer transitioning to a services economy; we are there. Over that same period, manufacturing has consistently represented about 15 percent of rapidly growing U.S. economic output. Manufacturing has become ever more productive; as any industry matures, this becomes increasingly necessary for survival. While continuous improvement is essential for any relatively mature business, the process of improvement itself is fairly routinized, and almost inexorably eliminates labor. Productivity gains are beneficial to consumers, but not so much to employees who have trouble moving or learning new skills.

THE ongoing stay of execution for the Detroit automakers represents an attempt to keep this process from reaching the last bastion of resistance. In spite of its glorious past, the Detroit ecosystem—Ford, GM, Chrysler, their suppliers, and their dealers—is going to have to go through the functional equivalent of bankruptcy, or else

Mr. Manzi is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and chairman of an applied-artificial-intelligence software company.

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become a ward of the state. Large economic transformations are always painful, and it is almost inevitable that industries, communities, and individuals will attempt to use the political process to protect their current status. In the end, though, a healthy political process will prevent this dynamic from choking off economic progress.

It is often easier for us to see this from a greater distance. Consider the evolution of the U.S. agricultural sector, which presaged what we have seen in manufacturing. In 1800, America was a nation of farmers. About three-quarters of the labor force worked in agriculture. The proportion has been in almost continuous decline since then. By the eve of the Civil War, it was a little over half; by 1900, it was about one-third. Today, agriculture represents less than 3 percent of the workforce. This has been great for consumers. Farming is incredibly efficient, and food is cheaper and more plentiful in real terms than ever before in human history—to the point that obesity is a serious public-health problem. American agriculture today is also a very successful industry. In 2007, the U.S. exported over $75 billion of agricultural products, and it has maintained a trade surplus in food for decades. It's just not an industry that can provide employment for very many people anymore.

This seems obvious now, but resistance to these changes was a key basis of the populist movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as farming's long-term decline in employment became undeniable. William Jennings Bryan is often seen as something of a laughingstock in contemporary culture because of his buffoonish treatment as the lawyer attacking the teaching of evolution in the 1960 movie *Inherit the Wind*, but he was a very influential political figure who won the Democratic nomination for president in 1896, 1900, and 1908. He, more than any other person, incorporated the key themes of the populist movement into the two-party system.

Bryan was unabashedly attempting to stand athwart economic history yelling "Stop!" In one of the most arresting passages in his famous "Cross of Gold" speech, he said bitterly: "I tell you that the great cities rest upon these broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic. But destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."

America became a manufacturing nation within Bryan's lifetime. This sweeping technological and economic change produced enormous flux in social, political, and family relationships, and his search for permanence was emotionally understandable. One of the most painful things about markets, one that tends to be made more extreme by periods of rapid change, is that they often make fools of our fathers. Sharp operators with an eye for the main chance often outperform those who carefully learn a trade and continue a tradition. The Industrial Revolution combined material deprivation for people who had known only farming with radical uncertainty about the future.

Bryan lost three presidential elections, so the other guys got to write the history books. But of course losing three times means that he won the nomination three times, which is excellent evidence that he spoke for a good fraction of the American people of his era. In the end, though, accepting his broad program would have meant opting out of the modern world. Though sentimentally painful, rejecting Bryan was wise. The alternative would have been to attempt to prop up emotionally resonant family farms and retard the development of the industrial economy.

THIS same dynamic has been playing out for manufacturing over the past 60 years. It has been exacerbated by international competition to a degree not seen in agriculture. Countries with much lower wages can produce goods cheaply and export them to the U.S. market, especially goods with labor-intensive manufacturing processes. Consequently—unlike the case with agriculture—the U.S. runs a consistent merchandise trade deficit. Those American manufacturing industries that are not in secular decline typically respond to this situation with one or more of the following strategies: (1) automate production to reduce the labor content, (2) manufacture overseas and become a research, design, and marketing company, (3) employ low-wage/low-skill manufacturing labor (very often illegal-immigrant labor with pre–New Deal economic protections), and (4) produce complex goods that require frequent manufacturing innovation and provide high-wage jobs. As Jack Welch, the legendary CEO of General Electric who probably did as much as any individual to drive manufacturing reform, put it in the 1980s: American factories must "automate, emigrate, or evaporate."

Most of these alternatives are bad for traditional-production workers, though some can work out well for manufacturing employees who can be flexible and develop advanced capabilities. As a result, while there is always a wage premium for those with better skills, manufacturing-sector jobs are increasingly re-segregating into high-skill/high-wage and low-skill/low-wage ghettos in a pattern very reminiscent of early-20th-century America. According to research by Claudia Goldin, an economic historian at Harvard, the ratio of pay for a starting engineer to that of the average production worker declined from about 1.4 in 1904 to about parity in 1956, at the peak of the post-war economic high tide. In 2007, the average starting industrial engineer made about $55,000 per year, or about 1.5 times the $37,000 that the average non-supervisory production worker made. And more broadly, wage inequality and the economy-wide skills premium have been rising in the U.S. for the past 30 years.

The days of getting out of high school, working in a factory, and having a middle-class life are pretty much gone, because the economic world of 1955 is gone. The jobs that provided this opportunity have been automated out of existence, and our international position no longer allows us to protect them at feasible cost. I take no joy in the need for restructuring the auto industry. I wish that old world still existed, but it does not.

I realize now that my attempts to resist this change were like William Jennings Bryan's attempts to resist the coming of the economic order that I was trying to preserve. I slowly came to understand through experience that my original vision of saving manufacturing would have destroyed it. Theories for how to revive American manufacturing abounded in the 1980s, and it's hard to exaggerate how difficult it is to understand which alternatives are feasible and which are not in the face of an economic transformation. It is almost impossible not to be guided by our sentiments in such a situation, and this happened to me.

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I fought the direction in which market price signals were pushing manufacturing, but in the end, they were the only reliable guide to what might work.

As a crude generalization, new economic sectors that rely on innovation are the ones that produce lots of high-wage jobs for an economy. It is often said that services are less productive than manufacturing, but in a certain way, this is the good thing about services: They provide *jobs*. Eventually, what we now call services will presumably go through the same transformation as farming and factories have, and we'll have to find a new sector to provide employment.

At each of these stages, we don't abandon the maturing industries. We still need food and manufactured goods, and it would be foolish to become completely dependent on foreign supplies for either. In the event of a real shooting war we couldn't book enough conference rooms to protect ourselves from a determined adversary. But, as we've seen, we are well able to feed ourselves, and we have an extremely robust manufacturing economy. In fact, had we tried to freeze in place either family farms or employee-intensive factories, we would probably have a far worse defense capability because we would have less domestic agricultural output and antiquated factories.

PHILIP GENDREAU/BETTMANN/CORBIS

Which new sectors will actually be productive, and how they will ultimately develop, is highly unpredictable. This is why the free play of markets with limited intrusion by the government is so essential. Almost all industrial policy ends up protecting existing institutions: This is a function of human nature and is not fixable with clever program design. In practice, industrial policy normally means maintaining jobs that a ruthless market would eliminate, and subsidizing technological developments that can be exploited by existing large firms. But these are rarely the sources of new high-wage jobs. Ironically, these attempts to protect ourselves end up creating a sclerotic economy that in the long run puts everyone at greater risk. The painful reality of economic growth is creative destruction, and in a globalized economy, to lose out in this race is ultimately to put ourselves at the mercy of those who may or may not share our interests.

There is, however, one thing that seems to be predictable about these changes. Historically, each new growth sector, from agriculture to manufacturing to services, has tended to be more abstract than its predecessor. This often leads them to be labeled as "not real work," and they seem to be a flimsy basis for an economy—just as, I assume, the first farmers who started to scratch out little garden plots were mocked by the hunters on one side and the gatherers on the other, those who did the "real work" in their clan.

I've seen this dynamic in fast-forward in the software industry. From directly manipulating physical circuits to assembler code to early programming languages to modern object-oriented programming languages, software has been on a 50-year journey of increasing abstraction from the physical movement of electrons. At each step, some experts in the prior art disparage practitioners of the new one as being not "real engineers." What they fail to realize is that the skills that the old guard mastered have become routinized, then automated, and are no longer a source of high-wage employment.

This ever-increasing requirement for abstract-reasoning capabilities is why the terrible performance of American students, as compared with international competitors, is so worrisome. While the culture is a significant source of this problem, we need better schools. New methods of organization are typically pioneered in the new industries that drive each economic transformation, and then propagate through other parts of the economy. As is widely known, our basic model of public schools—accepting raw material in the form of five-year-olds, and then adding value through a series of processing steps to produce educated graduates 12, 16, or more years later—is an application of the ideas of the industrial economy. Our progress in improving the quality of this model has stalled. Meanwhile, technology continues to automate away high-wage jobs, and our international competitors rapidly catch up with us, in some cases passing us.

We need a new vision for schools that looks a lot more like Silicon Valley than like Detroit: decentralized, entrepreneurial, and flexible. This will not mean abandoning traditional, disciplined learning, but rather incorporating it as a baseline and doing other things as well. The traditional response is that there are only so many hours in the day. True, but getting more done per hour of labor is just another way of saying "increasing productivity," and we can't let education exempt itself from the ongoing productivity revolution any more than we can the auto industry.

Most great teachers, software engineers, and manufacturing employees have intrinsic motivations for their work. This is healthy, and usually necessary for excellence. But the systems in which they work must be unsentimental about channeling these motivations in a progressive direction for society as a whole, when nobody really knows the long-term effects of their actions. This is what markets do, and why we need them. Our relevant political duty, then, is to defend markets. So while I remain emotionally a factory guy, I recognize that it is counterproductive to use the political process to prevent factories from becoming something almost unrecognizable to me. **NR**

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The Long View

BY ROB LONG

From the POTUS Inbox . . .

To: Husseinsmymiddlename@whitehouse.gov
From: rahmemmanuel@whitehouse.gov
Subject: Need clarity on tax issue

Sir:
A question from some of the new guys in the cabinet: If you've received more than $400,000 in small, unmarked bills from anyone in the past two years, is this something you need to report to the IRS? Do we have a policy on this?

To: Husseinsmymiddlename@whitehouse.gov
From: Joeklein@time.com
Subject: Your magnificence!

Dear Sir:
I know I'm not supposed to have your private e-mail address, but somehow I got it!!! A lady never tells her secrets!!! Anyhoo, just a short note to say how much I luv ya!!! And don't let the turkeys get you down!!! Everybody here @ *Time* thinks ur doing a gr8 job!!!!

<3
Joe

To: Husseinsmymiddlename@whitehouse.gov
From: jpodesta@whitehousetransition.gov
Subject: Lobbyists

Sir:
Just to clarify: when you said "NO" former lobbyists would serve in your administration, did that mean "no" as in "none" or did that mean "no" as in "some probably will be okay"? I ask only because it looks like we're going to end up with a couple of dozen here and there, and I just want you to have a heads-up. I don't think it's going to end up being a problem either way. No one in the press corps has even mentioned it.

Also: A couple of our minor cabinet secretaries are wondering if they'll need to file 2009 tax returns. I've told them that if they haven't been filing regularly for the past few years, it's probably not a good idea to suddenly start. Thoughts?

JP

To: Husseinsmymiddlename@whitehouse.gov
From: rahmemmanuel@whitehouse.gov
Subject: Issue

Sir:
I just got a call from the D.C. police. One of your cabinet officers—I'd rather not use the name, if that's okay; I know this is your private e-mail address, but still—has been arrested for shoplifting. When interviewed by police, the cabinet secretary apparently indicated that it was understood that cabinet-level officers were exempt from all misdemeanor-theft laws.

I've sent one of the kids down with bail money, but need some clarity on what laws, exactly, your cabinet officers are currently exempt from. Or do you want me to tell Holder to draw up a list at Justice? I don't think this is urgent. No one in the press corps has even asked about it.

To: Husseinsmymiddlename@whitehouse.gov
From: Joeklein@time.com
Subject: YOU!!!!

UR Awesome!!! Keep doing what you're doing.

<3
Joe

PS: Was at the Barnes & Noble on Connecticut and I think I saw one of your cabinet officers getting led away in cuffs. Don't worry! Mum's the word!

To: Husseinsmymiddlename@whitehouse.gov
From: rahmemmanuel@whitehouse.gov
Subject: Appointee activities

Sir:
Just saw on Drudge that some of your newly nominated cabinet-level appointees have been involved in methamphetamine production and at least one other was part of a murder-for-hire organization.

I really don't think this is going to be a big deal. So far, no one in the WH press corps is picking it up. My feeling is, we make the distinction between methamphetamine production (which is okay) and its distribution (which is technically illegal) and call it a day.

The murder-for-hire thing is a slightly thornier issue. Let's wait and see if it's going to be a problem. I don't see anything on nytimes.com. Or washingtonpost.com.

To: Husseinsmymiddlename@whitehouse.gov
From: bclinton@clintonglobalinitiative.org
Subject: Is this you?

Hey. Is this you? I got this e-mail address from some of my guys who work in your administration—there's a lot of 'em!—but I never know if I can trust them. Guess you're finding out the same thing, huh?

A bunch of the dudes I'm working with in Dubai might be e-mailing you about some stuff they've got cooking. I hope it's okay that I gave them this address. If they start to bug you, let me know.

Bill

PS: Are you on AIM? Would be fun to put you on my Buddy List.

To: Husseinsmymiddlename@whitehouse.gov
From: rahmemmanuel@whitehouse.gov
Subject: What should I tell him??

I think this is potentially a problem. Maybe we can come up with another private e-mail address to give him? Something that goes directly to your spam folder? Next action?

Begin Forwarded Message:
To: rahmemmanuel@whitehouse.gov
From: jbiden@whitehouse.gov
Subject: E-mail address

If I promise not to use it more than once or twice or maybe four times tops a day, would you please give me the POTUS's private e-mail address?? I sort of feel weird not having it.

Joe

To: Husseinsmymiddlename@whitehouse.gov
From: Joeklein@time.com
Subject: Hope and change!

Wow! What a great first 2 weeks! Wonderful! If it didn't make you uncomfortable or freak out the Secret Service, I'd kiss you on the lips the next time I see you!!! And I wouldn't stop there!!!!!

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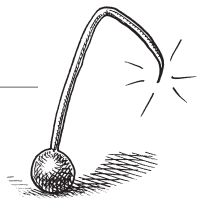

The Bent Pin

BY FLORENCE KING

The Classless Society

One day when I was very small—it was before the war—I was seated next to my mother as we drove through Georgetown. Passing a scabrous stone house with a shabby yard, she pointed to it and said, "I bet you high-class people live there. You can always tell because they don't put on. They don't have to."

I did not understand and promptly forgot the incident until, years later, I read *The Late George Apley* and came to the scene where a middle-class visitor assumes that the Apleys are broke because their Aubusson rugs are threadbare and their linen tablecloths are darned. In that moment my long-buried memory of the Georgetown drive rose up in my mind in perfect precise detail as if it had just happened. Now I knew exactly what my mother had meant, though I wondered how she had. We didn't know any high-class people, and she certainly had never read *The Late George Apley*, nor, as far as I knew, any other book. Neither was she one for discursive reflection and speculation. Hypotheses irritated her, were guaranteed to make her snap, "Suppose one thing, suppose another! Suppose a jackass was your brother!" Her observation about class did not come to her through the conventional cerebral procedure. She didn't actually think it out; it was more like picking up a scent: She had good instincts.

The Georgetown Moment is my first memory, and thus, according to the head-shrinkers, was a major influence in shaping my personality and temperament. That it was also an unusually early memory and remained buried for so long makes it even more likely that it has turned into my Rosebud, which probably explains why I spent Inauguration Day, New Administration Week, and Caroline Kennedy's bumbling pursuit of Hillary's Senate seat in a state of sodden despair muttering, "I want my mother."

The United States—of America, that is, as BHO carefully specifies—is embarked on an eternal search for class. So am I, but I believe in leveling up, not down. I am the Wrong-Way Corrigan of democracy, which is why I get off on things like the story about the King of Spain whose lisp caused him to pronounce "ez" as "eth." So enthusiastically did his subjects imitate him that his speech defect grew into the linguistic perfection of aristocratic form known as Castilian Spanish.

Never let it be said that Americans don't imitate our betters too. BHO said "shovel ready" and now the talking heads are saying it every chance they get, guaranteeing that it will spread through the land until it becomes the bee in every hardhat and the forklift in every tongue. The same thing happened in the '80s when the accolade of choice was "street smart." Describing a quality found in underprivileged survivors of the school of hard knocks, it swelled and groaned through media overuse until it was applied indiscriminately to Ivy League deans, Rhodes scholars running for president, boardroom poo-bahs, and graduates of Choate.

Florence King can be reached at P.O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, VA 22404.

Our biggest misconception about class is that it can be combined with friendliness that never sleeps, smiles that never fade, and unconditional love. This is why Nancy Pelosi, who looks like Tosca and could have the clout of a Medici, will go down in history as the greatest footnote of all time. The identifying characteristics of class still suggest the 18th century: archness, icy politeness, dry detachment—the whole crisp panoply of unassailable self-assurance that would bomb on television because class is defined by what it refuses to accept and Americans reject anything less than total acceptance.

We want a person with class to be "just like me," and during the Week That Was we got our wish. The fallen archness of Caroline Kennedy demolished the Algonquin's proud history of whiplash ripostes and plunked us all down at the Motel 6 Square Table. Never has it been more painfully obvious that money and celebrity have nothing to do with class. Caroline Kennedy is a pathetic dud; dull, boring, monotonal, tongue-tied, with a stoop-shouldered, lumbering walk like that of someone pushing a plow.

Interestingly, she made the media mad enough to run loops of her "y'know"s, but they were mad for the wrong reason: She proved that Camelot is not as classy as they want it to be. It certainly isn't. In their biography of the Kennedy family, Collier and Horowitz relate that as Joe Kennedy Jr. climbed into his plane for his fatal mission, another pilot asked him, "Is your insurance paid up?" and Joe replied, "Nobody in my family needs insurance."

Threatened by class per se, we substitute the "class act," a one-time triumph by someone who may or may not be classy but who is hailed as the next-best thing: a hero. We got one just in time for the inauguration and he almost bumped BHO off the news. Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger's perfect landing in the Hudson River triggered the hysteria-tinged joy that pours out of us whenever someone admirable comes along. What we actually are looking for is what Jefferson called "natural aristocracy," but we recoil from its definition. It refers to an X Factor, something you either have or you don't, something schools can't teach and governments can't dole out, like an ear for music. Either you're born with it or you're not, and so Americans, haunted by "created equal," won't touch it with a barge pole.

There is no way out of our class problem as long as we cloud the issue with fame and money. We will never get it right but we'll keep trying, even if it's just a little George Apley in the night. Stand by for a *Girls Gone Wild* bonanza in a rug store called "The Barest Threads" and a pitch by everybody's favorite infomercial guy: "Billy Mays here for Darn It! The faux darning kit that gives you a touch of class!"

In one brief shining moment, my mother made me a conservative elitist. Too bad we can't give her the wool so she could make some more. **NR**

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The Best Conservative Movies

Once in a blue moon, Hollywood releases a conservative movie, or at least a film that resonates with conservatives in a particular way. Because conservatives love movies—and especially debates about movies—we decided to produce a list of the 25 best conservative movies of the last 25 years. Our approach in selecting them doesn't rise to the level of an actual methodology, but there was a method to it. We asked readers of National Review Online to submit nominations. Hundreds of suggestions came in, along with explanations and arguments. We considered each one, tallied them up, and consulted a number of film buffs and professional moviemakers.

We do not claim that the writers, directors, producers, gaffers, and key grips involved with these films are conservative. We certainly make no such assertion about the actors. Yet the results are indisputable: Conservatives enjoy these films because they are great movies that offer compelling messages about freedom, families, patriotism, traditions, and more.

—John J. Miller

1. ***The Lives of Others*** (2007): "I think that this is the best movie I ever saw," said William F. Buckley Jr. upon leaving the theater (according to his column on the film). The tale, set in East Germany in 1984, is one part romantic drama, one part political thriller. It chronicles life under a totalitarian regime as the Stasi secretly monitors the activities of a playwright who is suspected of harboring doubts about Communism. Critics showered the movie with praise and it won an Oscar for best foreign-language film (it's in German). More Buckley: "The tension mounts to heart-stopping pitch and I felt the impulse to rush out into the street and drag passersby in to watch the story unfold."

—John J. Miller

2. ***The Incredibles*** (2004): This animated film skips pop-culture references and gross jokes in favor of a story that celebrates marriage, courage, responsibility, and high achievement. A family of superheroes—Mr. Incredible, his wife Elastigirl, and their children—are living an anonymous life in the suburbs, thanks to a society that doesn't appreciate their unique talents. Then it comes to need them. In one scene, son Dash, a super-speedy runner, wants to try out for track. Mom claims it wouldn't be fair. "Dad says our powers make us special!" Dash objects. "Everyone is special," Mom demurs, to which Dash mutters, "Which means nobody is."

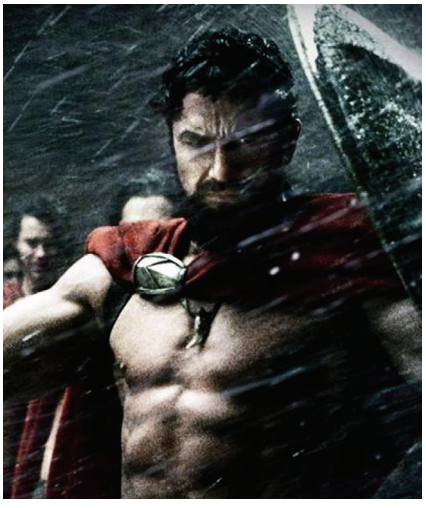
—Frederica Mathewes-Greene writes for Beliefnet.com.

3. ***Metropolitan*** (1990): Whit Stillman's Oscar-nominated debut takes a red-headed outsider into the luxurious drawing rooms and debutante balls of New York's Upper East Side elite. One character, a committed socialist, falls for the discreet charm of the urban haute bourgeoisie. Another plaintively theorizes the inevitable doom of his class. A reader of Jane Austen wonders what's wrong with a novel's having a virtuous heroine. And a roguish defender of standards and detachable collars delivers more sophisticated conservative one-liners than a year's worth of Yale Party of the Right debates. With mocking affection, gentle irony, and a blizzard of witty dialogue, Stillman manages the impossible: He brings us to see what is admirable and necessary in the customs and conventions of America's upper class.

—Mark Henrie is the editor of Doomed Bourgeois in Love: Essays on the Films of Whit Stillman.

4. ***Forrest Gump*** (1994): It won an Oscar for best picture—beating *Pulp Fiction*, a movie that's far more expressive of Hollywood's worldview. Tom Hanks plays the title character, an amiable dunce who is far too smart to embrace the lethal values of the 1960s. The love of his life, wonderfully played by Robin Wright Penn, chooses a different path; she becomes a drug-addled hippie, with disastrous results. Forrest's IQ may be room temperature, but he serves as an unexpected font of wisdom. Put 'em on a Whitman's Sampler, but Mama Gump's famous words about life's being like a box of chocolates ring true.

—Charlotte Hays is co-author of Somebody Is Going to Die If Lilly Beth Doesn't Catch That Bouquet.



WARNER BROS.

5. ***300*** (2007): During the Bush years, Hollywood neglected the heroism of American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan—but it did release this action film about martial honor, unflinching courage, and the oft-ignored truth that freedom isn't free. Beneath a layer of egregious non-history—including goblin-like creatures that belong in a fantasy epic—is a stylized story about the ancient battle of Thermopylae and the Spartan defense of the West's fledgling institutions. It contrasts a small band of Spartans, motivated by their convictions and a commitment to the law, with a Persian horde that is driven

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THE NATIONAL REVIEW

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Thur/July 9	AT SEA		morning, afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
Fri/July 10	Dubrovnik, Croatia	8AM-6PM	late-night smoker
Sat/July 11	Corfu, Greece	8AM-6PM	
Sun/July 12	Katakolon, Greece	7AM-2PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
Mon/July 13	Santorini, Greece	8AM-9PM	
Tue/July 14	Ephesus, Turkey	7AM-7PM	"night owl" session
Wed/July 15	Piraeus, Greece	8AM-6PM	"night owl" session
Thur/July 16	AT SEA		morning, afternoon seminars late-night smoker
Fri/July 17	Messina, Sicily	7AM-2PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
Sat/July 18	Rome/Civitavecchia	7AM	

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forward by whips. In the words recorded by the real-life Herodotus: "Law is their master, which they fear more than your men[, Xerxes,] fear you."

—Michael Poliakoff, a classicist, is vice president for academic affairs at the University of Colorado.

6. ***Groundhog Day*** (1993): This putatively wacky comedy about Bill Murray as an obnoxious weatherman cursed to relive the same day over and over in a small Pennsylvania town, perhaps for eternity, is in fact a sophisticated commentary on the good and true. Theologians and philosophers across the ideological spectrum have embraced it. For the conservative, the moral of the tale is that redemption and meaning are derived not from indulging your "authentic" instincts and drives, but from striving to live up to external and timeless ideals. Murray begins the film as an irony-soaked narcissist, contemptuous of beauty, art, and commitment. His journey of self-discovery leads him to understand that the fads of modernity are no substitute for the permanent things.

—Jonah Goldberg

7. ***The Pursuit of Happyness*** (2006): Based on the life of self-made millionaire Chris Gardner (Will Smith), this film provides the perfect antidote to *Wall Street* and other Hollywood diatribes depicting the world of finance as filled with nothing but greed. After his wife leaves him, Gardner can barely pay the rent. He accepts an unpaid internship at a San Francisco brokerage, with the promise of a real job if he outperforms the other interns and passes his exams. Gardner never succumbs to self-pity, even when he and his young son take refuge in a homeless shelter. They're black, but there's no racial undertone or subtext. Gardner is just an incredibly hard-working, ambitious, and smart man who wants to do better for himself and his son.

—Linda Chavez is chairman of the Center for Equal Opportunity.

8. ***Juno*** (2007): The best pro-life movies reach beyond the church choirs and influence the wider public. *Juno* was a critical and commercial success. It didn't set out to deliver a message on abortion, but much of its audience discovered one anyway. The story revolves around a 16-year-old who finds a home for her unplanned baby. The film has its faults, including a number of crass moments and a pregnant high-school student with an unrealistic level of self-confidence. Yet it also exposes a broken culture in which teen sex is dehumanizing, girls struggle with "choice," and boys aimlessly try—and sometimes downright fail—to become men. The movie doesn't glamorize much of anything but leaves audiences with an open-ended chance for redemption.

—Kathryn Jean Lopez

9. ***Blast from the Past*** (1999): *Revolutionary Road* is only the latest big-screen portrayal of 1950s America as boring, conformist, repressive, and soul-destroying. A decade ago, Hugh Wilson's *Blast from the Past* defied the party line, seeing the values, customs, manners, and even music of the period with nostalgic longing. Brendan Fraser plays an innocent who has grown up in a fallout shelter and doesn't know the era of Sputnik and Perry Como is over. Alicia Silverstone is a post-feminist woman who learns from him that pre-feminist women had some things going for them. Christopher Walken and Sissy Spacek as Fraser's parents are comic gems.

—James Bowman is a movie critic.

10. ***Ghostbusters*** (1984): This comedy might not get Russell Kirk's endorsement as a worthy treatment of the supernatural, but you have to like a movie in which the bad guy (William Atherton at his loathsome best) is a regulation-happy buffoon from the EPA, and the solution to a public menace comes from the private sector. This last fact is the other reason to love *Ghostbusters*: When Dr. Peter Venkman (Bill Murray) gets kicked out of the university lab and ponders pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities, a nervous Dr. Raymond Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) replies: "I don't know about that. I've worked in the private sector. They expect results!"

—Steven F. Hayward is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

11. ***The Lord of the Rings*** (2001, 2002, 2003): Author J. R. R. Tolkien was deeply conservative, so it's no surprise that the trilogy of movies based on his masterwork is as well. Largely filmed before 9/11, they seemed perfectly pitched for the post-9/11 world. The debates over what to do about Sauron and Saruman echoed our own disputes over the Iraq War. (Think of Wormtongue as Keith Olbermann.) When Frodo sighs, "I wish none of this had happened," Gandalf's response speaks to us, too: "So do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us."

—Andrew Leigh is a screenwriter and producer in Los Angeles.

12. ***The Dark Knight*** (2008): This film gives us a portrait of the hero as a man reviled. In his fight against the terrorist Joker, Batman has to devise new means of surveillance, push the limits of the law, and accept the hatred of the press and

GROUNDHOG DAY: SONY PICTURES *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*: NEW LINE PRODUCTIONS

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public. If that sounds reminiscent of a certain former president—whose stubborn integrity kept the nation safe and turned the tide of war—don't mention it to the mainstream media. Our journalists know that good men are often despised by the mob; it just never seems to occur to them that they might be the mob themselves.

—Andrew Klavan is the author of Empire of Lies.

13. ***Braveheart*** (1995): Forget the travesty this soaring action film makes of the historical record. *Braveheart* raised its hero, medieval Scottish warrior William Wallace, to the level of myth and won five Oscars, including best director for Mel Gibson, who played Wallace as he led a spirited revolt against English tyranny. *Braveheart* taught that freedom is not just worth dying for, but also worth killing for, in defense of hearth and homeland. Six years later, amid the ruins of the Twin Towers, Gibson's message resonated with a generation of American youth who signed up to fight terrorists, instead of inviting them to join a "constructive dialogue." Liberals have never forgiven Gibson since.

—Arthur Herman is the author of How the Scots Invented the Modern World.

14. ***A Simple Plan*** (1998): A defining insight of conservatism is that whatever transcendent inspiration there may be to moral principles, there is also the humble fact that morality works. Moral institutions and customs endure because they allow civilization to proceed. Sam Raimi's gripping *A Simple Plan* illustrates this truth. Bill Paxton plays a decent family man who lives by the book in every way. But when he's cajoled into breaking the rules to get rich quick, he falls under the jurisdiction of the law of unintended consequences and discovers that simple morality is not simplistic, and that a seductively simple plan is a siren song if it runs against the grain of what is right.

—Jonah Goldberg

15. ***Red Dawn*** (1984): From the safe, familiar environment of a classroom, we watch countless parachutes drop from the sky and into the heart of America. Oh, no: invading Commies! Laugh if you want—many do—but *Red Dawn* has survived countless more acclaimed films because Father Time has always been our most reliable film critic. The essence of timelessness is more than beauty. It's also truth, and the truth that America is a place and an idea worth fighting and dying for will not be denied, not under a pile of left-wing critiques or even *Red Dawn*'s own melodramatic flaws. Released at the midpoint of Reagan's presidential showdown with the Soviet Union, this story of what was at stake in the Cold War endures.

—John Nolte blogs at BigHollywood.Breitbart.com.

16. ***Master and Commander*** (2003): This naval-adventure film starring Russell Crowe is based on the books of Patrick O'Brian, and here's what A. O. Scott of the *New York Times* said in his review: "The Napoleonic wars that followed the French Revolution gave birth, among other things, to British conservatism, and *Master and Commander*, making no concessions to modern, egalitarian sensibilities, is among the most thoroughly and proudly conservative movies ever made. It imagines the [H.M.S.] *Surprise* as a coherent society in which stability is underwritten by custom and every man knows his duty and his place. I would not have been surprised to see Edmund Burke's name in the credits."

—John J. Miller

17. ***The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*** (2005): The White Witch runs a godless, oppressive, paranoid regime that hates Santa Claus. She's a cross between Burgermeister Meisterburger and Kim Jong Il. The good guys, meanwhile, recognize that some throats will need cutting: no appeasement, no land-for-peace swaps, no offering the witch a snowmobile if she'll only put away the wand. Underlying the narrative is the story of Christ's rescuing man from sin—which is antithetical to the leftist dream of perfected man's becoming an instrument for earthly utopia. The results of such utopian visions, of course, are frequently like the Witch's reign: always winter, and never Christmas.

—Tony Woodlief writes for World *magazine and blogs at tonywoodlief.com.*

18. ***The Edge*** (1997): Screenwriter David Mamet uses a wilderness survival story about friendship, betrayal, and forgiveness to present a few truths rarely seen in movies: Knowledge has its limits, fortitude is a weapon against hardship, and honor can motivate even the shallowest man to great sacrifice. Some have interpreted the film as a Cold War allegory because it features a menacing bear. The main characters (played by Anthony Hopkins and Alec Baldwin) understand that there is neither wisdom nor nobility in waiting for others to save them, and that they must take responsibility for their own lives and souls. Life is unfair, but to challenge life on its own terms is an exhilarating reward, no matter the outcome.

—Michael Long is a director of the White House Writers Group.

19. ***We Were Soldiers*** (2002): Most movies about the Vietnam War reflect the derangements of the antiwar Left. This film, based on the memoir by Lt. Col. Hal Moore (played by Mel Gibson), offers a lifelike alternative. It focuses on a fight between an outnumbered U.S. Army battalion and three North Vietnamese regiments in the battle of Ia Drang in 1965. Significantly, it treats soldiers not as wretched losers or pathological killers, but as regular citizens. They are men willing to sacrifice everything to do their duty—to their country, to their unit, and to their fellow soldiers. As the movie makes clear, they also had

20TH CENTURY FOX

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families. Indeed, their last thoughts were usually about their loved ones back home.

—Mackubin Thomas Owens, a Vietnam veteran, is a professor at the Naval War College.

20. ***Gattaca*** (1997): In this science-fiction drama, Vincent (Ethan Hawke) can't become an astronaut because he's genetically unenhanced. So he purchases the identity of a disabled athlete (Jude Law), with calamitous results. The movie is a cautionary tale about the progressive fantasy of a eugenically correct world—the road to which is paved by the abortion of Down babies, research into human cloning, and "transhumanist" dreams of fabricating a "post-human species." Biotechnology is a force for good, but without adherence to the ideal of universal human equality, it opens the door to the soft tyranny of *Gattaca* and, ultimately, the dystopian nightmare of *Brave New World*.

—Wesley J. Smith is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute.

21. ***Heartbreak Ridge*** (1986): Clint Eastwood's foul-mouthed Marine sergeant Tom Highway makes quick work of kicking Communist Cubans out of Grenada. And, boy, does "Gunny" hate Commies. Not only does he kill quite a few, he also refuses a bribe of a Cuban cigar, saying: "Get that contraband stogie out of my face before I shove it so far up you're a** you'll have to set fire to your nose to light it." A welcome glorification of Reagan's decision to liberate Grenada in 1983, the film also notes how after a tie in Korea and a loss in Vietnam, America can finally celebrate a military victory. Eastwood, the old war horse, walks off into retirement pleased that he's not "0–1–1 anymore." Semper Fi. Oo-rah!

—James G. Lakely is managing editor of InfoTech & Telecom News *at the Heartland Institute.*

22. ***Brazil*** (1985): Vividly depicting the miserable results of elitist utopian schemes, Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* portrays a darkly comic dystopia of malfunctioning high-tech equipment and the dreary living conditions common to all totalitarian regimes. Everything in the society is built to serve government plans rather than people. The film is visually arresting and inventive, with especially evocative use of shots that put the audience in a subservient position, just like the people in the film. Terrorist bombings, national-security scares, universal police surveillance, bureaucratic arrogance, a callous elite, perversion of science, and government use of torture evoke the worst aspects of the modern megastate.

—S. T. Karnick blogs at stkarnick.com.

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

23. ***United 93*** (2006): Minutes after terrorists struck on 9/11, Americans launched their first counterattack in the War on Terror. Director Paul Greengrass pays tribute to the passengers of United 93 by refusing to turn their story into a wimpy Hollywood melodrama. Instead, *United 93* unfolds as a real-time docudrama. Just as significantly, Greengrass provides a clear depiction of our enemies. United 93 opens as four Muslim terrorists pray in a hotel room. Several hours later, the hijackers' frenzied shrieks to Allah mingle with the prayerful supplications of United 93's passengers as they crash through the cockpit door and strike a blow against those who would terrorize our country.

—Andrew Coffin is director of the Reagan Ranch and vice president of Young America's Foundation.

24. ***Team America: World Police*** (2004): This marionette movie from *South Park* creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone is hard to categorize as conservative. It's amazingly vulgar and depicts Americans as wildly overzealous in fighting terror. Yet the film's utter disgust with air-headed, left-wing celebrity activism remains unmatched in popular culture. As the heroes move to stop a WMD apocalypse, they clash with Alec Baldwin, Tim Robbins, Susan Sarandon, Sean Penn, and a host of others, whom they take out with gunfire, sword, and martial arts before saving the day. The movie, like *South Park* itself, reveals Parker and Stone as the two-headed George Grosz of American satire.

—Brian C. Anderson is editor of City Journal *and author of* South Park Conservatives.

25. ***Gran Torino*** (2008): Clint Eastwood directs and stars in the ultimate family movie unsuitable for the family. He plays Walt Kowalski, a caricature of an old-school, dying-breed, Polish-American racist male, replete with post-traumatic stress disorder from having served in the Korean War. Kowalski comes to realize that his exotic Hmong neighbors embody traditional social values more than his own disaster of a Caucasian nuclear family. Dirty Harry blows away political correctness, takes on the bad guys, and turns a boy into a man in the process. He even encourages the cultural assimilation of immigrants. It feels so good, you knew the Academy would ignore it.

—Andrew Breitbart is the proprietor of BigHollywood.Breitbart.com.

The Also-Rans

25 more great conservative movies

Air Force One, Amazing Grace, An American Carol, Barcelona, Bella, Cinderella Man, The Exorcism of Emily Rose, Hamburger Hill, The Hanoi Hilton, The Hunt for Red October, The Island, Knocked Up, The Last Days of Disco, The Lost City, Miracle, The Patriot, Rocky Balboa, Serenity, Stand and Deliver, Tears of the Sun, Thank You for Smoking, Three Kings, Tin Men, The Truman Show, Witness

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Rabbit's Great Run

RICHARD BROOKHISER

My Updike kick started 30 years ago, with an old paperback, bought from a used bookseller, of *Rabbit, Run* (1960), his first novel about Harry Angstrom. What hooked me was the third sentence. The hero, 26 years old, is coming home from his job demonstrating kitchen utensils in a department store, when he stops to watch some boys playing basketball. "The scrape and snap of Keds on loose alley pebbles seems to catapult their voices high into the moist March air blue above the wires." Harry had been a star once: "In his junior year he set a B-league scoring record that in his senior year he broke with a record that was not broken until four years later, that is, four years ago." He joins in the game, thrilled to feel the remnants of his old skill, then goes home to his drunken, pregnant wife, who seems less thrilling.

The next 20 pages keep up the momentum. Harry decides, as the title says, to run. If he leaves his hometown, a small Pennsylvania city in what was not yet called the Rust Belt, and drives south, maybe he will find something better; maybe running will be better. Updike and the car radio propel him on. "Melodies turn to ice as real night music takes over, pianos and vibes erecting clusters in the high brittle octaves and a clarinet wandering across like a crack on a pond." His flight doesn't work out; he gets turned around in the night, and dawn finds him back home, and in his life. The rest of the book sagged a bit, but this was a strong start, for Updike and for me.

It was easy to find his old books in paperback, new or used, and brand-new hardcovers kept coming out, one every year. Some were excellent. But after eight or ten years, I began to lose my way, like Harry himself. Updike's productivity was wearying. His essays, mostly book reviews, were generous but bland; his poetry, which often appeared first in *The New Yorker*, was not good (he called one collection *The Carpentered Hen*: labored and lifeless—exactly). His interests—adultery, Christianity—became, in large doses, tics. He had no humor, I thought, and he couldn't inhabit women. Neither of these judgments was entirely true, but both are true of much of his work. I still loved those sentences, but where were they going? So, at some point in the late Eighties I simply stopped—and missed a dozen books.

Now that he has died, I hunt through my shelves for the books that I have not given away, and look for what was there.

Start with those sentences. It is possible to be a great writer who is also a bad writer: James Fenimore Cooper comes to mind. But it is so much easier to be great when you are also good. Writers and readers should respect the tools of the trade. It is better to be exact, not vague; sharp, not blunt; evocative, not earthbound; musical, not tone-deaf; smart, not stupid. Of those five good qualities, Saul Bellow was only smart; Philip Roth misses being evocative. Updike at his best drew straight after straight.

"Novel" literally means new. A novel can be a superior Fodor's. Updike's favorite territory was mid-century America. He started with his home turf. "What sort of a town is Reading?" asked George Washington in 1793 when it looked like yellow fever might drive the federal government out of Philadelphia. Updike told us (he was born in nearby Shillington), then branched out to all of suburbia. America pops up even when he seems to be elsewhere. Hakim Félix Ellelloû, dictator of Kush, the made-up African country that is the setting of *The Coup* (1978), was an exchange student early in life, a kind of reverse Obama. As he is about to decapitate his predecessor, the victim's bared neck makes him think of "a candy apple, such as one buys at county fairs in Wisconsin—its tough glaze, its slender wooden stick, its little cap of coconut. The first bite is most difficult." Elsewhere the dictator calls America "that fountainhead of obscenity and glut"—but he can't get it out of his mind.

Novels should introduce us to other people. Most of Updike's successful characters were (one gathers) rather like himself: willful but uncertain white Protestant men. Such folk merit our attention, so long as they can compel it. But Updike could vary his dramatis personae. Unusual narrators gave certain of his books a built-in structural comedy. Ellelloû bounces between Africa and America, black and white (one of his wives is a white former classmate he keeps in a burqa), his glittering rhetoric (some of the best French ever written in English) and his misadventures. Roger Lambert, the divinity professor who narrates *Roger's Version* (1986), is white and (sort of) Protestant, but he also appears to be Satan. He keeps fretting over a broken fingernail (his cloven hoof?). Everything he says about Christianity, and the affair between his wife and a Jesus-freak grad student that he colludes in, has to be taken with

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Some flaky kid gave me gravel for a grin,
I'm bundled up against the cold in a cast-off coat,
and the scarf—that's a joke, am I right?

There's nothing I can do but stand and wait.
That must be what the watch cap's for,
and the shovel, too—to fill the empty hours,

or empty them of the whiteout my life has been.

God knows why, but I'm built to face the road
and across the way there's another one like me.
She's grinning like a lunatic, too,

and our skinny arms are stretching out,
our anthracite eyes burn with the desire
to rush into something nice and cold,

when we both know we were made for the sun.

—TED GILLEY

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a pound of salt. The devil also appears in *The Witches of Eastwick* (1984), to seduce the witches of the title, divorcees who have set up a coven in a modern Rhode Island town. The narrator is an anonymous gossipy neighbor, but we spend most of our time in the witches' points of view—a successful attempt to cross the gender divide, and try to look at life, loss, and men (most of them losers, the greatest being the devil himself) from the other side.

One of Updike's best non-Updike characters is the Jewish novelist Henry Bech. Jews ruled American literature in the last half of the last century. Keith Mano wrote, in these pages, that in future times the gentiles of our day would be like the Hittites, background figures in Semitic chronicles. Using Bech, Updike decided to look at literary life from the kosher side: Youthful ambition, writer's block, reviewers, editors, fans, they're all hilariously there. The list of books and articles by and about Bech at the end of *Bech: A Book* (1970) is bibliography as stand-up. "Podhoretz, Norman, 'Bech's Noble Novel: A Case Study in the Pathology of Criticism,' *Commentary*, XXXIV (October, 1963)."

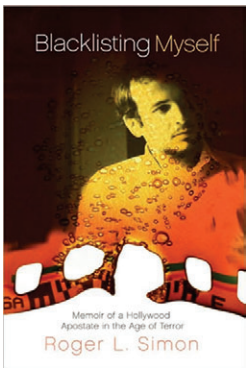
We also expect novels to give us a situation, the writer's take on the world we call real. If the writer does not share himself, his stories will fall willy-nilly into stale genres, like some mixture of journalism and television. What Updike shared with us was a belief that the world was lovable, combined with a doubt, against which he strove, that it might be a screen for nothing at all. "All year, without knowing it," a dying woman in *Witches of Eastwick* "had been saying good-bye to each season . . . [to] that vernal moment when the snowdrops and croci are warmed into bloom out of matted brown grass in that intimate area on the sunward side of stone walls, as when lovers cup their breath against the beloved's neck; she had been saying goodbye, for the seasons would not wheel around again for her."

It's hard to say what his Christianity consisted of; its only sacrament seemed to be adultery. But we don't go to novelists for theology. In the lasting ones we find thoughts we may already have had, which strike us with redoubled force in new guises.

Now that John Updike has died, and the stream of new books has stopped, it will be time to go back, at leisure and selectively, to the ones I liked and the ones that got away. **NR**

A Small Tent

RONALD RADOSH



Blacklisting Myself: Memoir of a Hollywood Apostate in the Age of Terror, by Roger L. Simon (Encounter, 250 pp., $25.95)

THE question Roger Simon seeks to answer in his unsparing, alternately funny and sad but always fascinating second-thoughts memoir is: Why did he change from an idealistic Hollywood leftist to a person who ended up voting for George W. Bush? How, Simon asks, did he come to have the improbable distinction of being "favorably profiled by both *Mother Jones* and *National Review*?"

During the tumultuous 1960s, the aspiring screenwriter and novelist was a young man with a left-wing political bent. Migrating to Hollywood after attending Dartmouth, he would sit by a dilapidated old pool near the apartment he was renting, reading novels about old-time Hollywood—including Budd Schulberg's classic *What Makes Sammy Run?* Simon had actually met the writer when his father, who had been a classmate of Schulberg at Dartmouth, introduced the twelve-year-old Roger to him at a Yale game. Little did Roger Simon suspect that, like Schulberg, who became a pariah after breaking with the Communists in the 1930s and later testifying as a friendly witness before HUAC, he would end up as an apostate from the Left.

When Simon went to Hollywood, his apostasy lay far in the future. Left-wing Hollywood had been living off the myth of the old anti-Communist blacklist for decades, and Simon was captivated by it. He joined the Writers Guild and avidly sought out the remnant of the old Hollywood Left still living in Los Angeles. He was, he writes, a "wannabe blacklisted screenwriter."

Soon Simon was on the way up. He created the character of Moses Wine, a "left-wing hippie detective" who was the protagonist of his eight detective novels. The first of these, *The Big Fix*, became a bestseller and was made into a movie, whose screenplay Simon wrote, starring Richard Dreyfuss. He had other screenwriting successes, including the adaptation of Isaac Bashevis Singer's *Enemies: A Love Story*, and hitched up with some of the most prominent names of the new Hollywood hip Left.

Of course, no New Leftist in the 1970s was worth his salt if he didn't take the obligatory trips to the existing socialist paradises. Simon made the journey to all three: Mao's China, Castro's Cuba, and, of course, the Soviet motherland itself. These trips and the contacts he made there were considered, Simon writes, "groovy" in Hollywood and gave him a certain "panache."

Through his contacts, Simon was invited to China as part of the "U.S. China People's Friendship Association People's Friendship Tour #2." Travelling to China as it was just emerging from the Cultural Revolution was quite a different experience than it is for someone taking a first-class trip there today. One was visiting a strange place where everyone dressed the same and there was little to purchase; as one entered the greeting center from Hong Kong, one listened to tinny loudspeakers playing "The East Is Red." As Simon writes, there seemed to be little want, and everyone had what they called "three rounds and a sound": a watch, a sewing machine, a bicycle, and a transistor radio. Maybe they didn't require anything else? In this materialistic world, he mused at the time, maybe their way of life was even superior? But Simon goes on to explain his thoughts back then: Perhaps he was suffering from some form of Stockholm Syndrome. After all,

Mr. Radosh, an adjunct fellow at the Hudson Institute, is co-author of Red Star over Hollywood: The Film Colony's Long Romance with the Left, *and author of* Commies: A Journey through the Old Left, the New Left, and the Leftover Left.

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he knew how brutal the Cultural Revolution had been, and he knew that he was visiting "a country whose perverted logic made Orwell's Animal Farm look rational."

Nevertheless, he couldn't wait to get home to Hollywood to tell everyone about it. He would, at cocktail parties, have to admit to some "appropriate reservations," but it was more important to be basically positive and "create envy and admiration." Simon went on to write a novel about his experience, *Peking Duck*, but was not wholly honest in the book about "the totalitarian world I'd been visiting." He needed to protect his reputation as a cutting-edge radical.

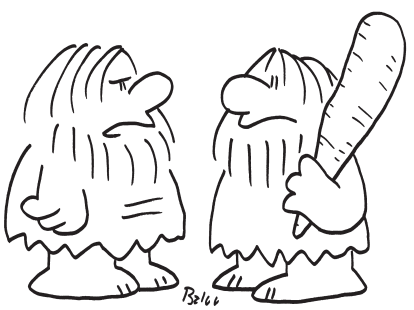
Simon gives us similar pictures of his experiences in Cuba and Russia. In the late 1980s, he got involved in a mystery-writers' organization called the International Association of Crime Writers, which he later suspected was serving as a Communist front. He was flattered to be chosen the North American vice president of its executive committee. During an organizing meeting in Mexico, he met one Julian Semyonov, who convinced him that he had to take a sponsored trip to the USSR. Taken from Moscow to the Black Sea, he was followed constantly, stayed in bugged hotel rooms, and was given an invitation to work for the KGB. This last offer was made by an attractive young woman whose entreaties the spy agency obviously thought Simon would accept. The experiences helped make him think. "The more time I spent in the Soviet Union," he writes in this book, "the more I despised, more precisely dreaded, them and their culture." Leaving the country, he says, "felt like being released from jail."

In Cuba, Simon went to a film festival where he met with the Frenchman Régis Debray, at the time a revolutionary follower of Che Guevara. Simon stood in awe, even knowing, as he writes, that "the man was Che's most famous apologist and that Guevara had been responsible for the ruthless killings of many of his one-time allies." He already knew that Cuba "was a kind of giant jail of once-ornate homes and run-down DeSotos, its people sad, desperate, and undernourished." Even so, Simon was still "in the grip of the romantic fascination" of being behind the forbidden Iron Curtain.

But the cognitive dissonance began to trouble him. For quite a while he lived in a sort of "twilight zone where many in my generation found themselves, sympathizing, in principle, with the egalitarian socialist ideal while encouraging, even helping, writers and other dissidents to escape those societies." Gradually he became disillusioned with the pervasive left-wing assumptions and culture of Hollywood. Liberal-Left politics, he observed, had become "the accepted norm, a ticket to employment or, if not that, a safety net for those already employed." Where once it was primarily the writers who were leftists, this zeitgeist began to permeate the entire community, including the once-conservative executive suite.

Simon attributes this to the arrival in Hollywood of the "baby moguls"—heirs of 1960s campus radicalism who broadcast their left-wing credentials while owning multiple homes. Despite their radical poses, claims Simon, they weren't the ones making left-wing movies: Those films were actually produced by non-political executives who thought they could make a buck. "Once ensconced in their positions, [the baby moguls] were the antithesis of left-wing, riding around in studio Mercedes and going to fancy expense-account dinners." The revolution could wait.

Simon gives readers a romp through Hollywood from the 1960s to the present, as he becomes a player among the likes of Woody Allen, Warren Beatty, Paul Mazursky, Abbie Hoffman, Timothy Leary, and the Black Panthers. The highlight for this reader is Simon's nuanced and sympathetic portrait of the late, troubled genius of comedy Richard Pryor. Pryor, he writes, was the only star who "treated people high and low alike"; he never kissed up to studio executives he despised. Seeing something in Simon that he admired, Pryor agreed to sign him on as screenwriter for his next film, which became the major hit *Bustin' Loose*.



"We just invented cooking yesterday, and already she's serving leftovers."

Before long, Simon became victim to what he calls "the continuing collision between racial politics and the entertainment industry." The problem: One of the first "African-American produced movies in major studio history" had a screenwriter [who] happened to be Caucasian. When the NAACP awarded the film a prize, no writer was mentioned, and Simon was not invited to the ceremony. He had become "a white non-person."

The two events that finally ended Simon's dance with the Left were the O. J. Simpson murder trial and 9/11. Simon had met Simpson at parties, at which the actor/football star seemed "jovial, handsome, and harmless." As a writer of crime novels, he followed the trial closely, and concluded that Simpson was guilty beyond a shadow of a doubt and that the DNA evidence alone should have convicted him. He thought that the jury's verdict was racially biased and a miscarriage of justice.

The 9/11 attacks started him on a quest to understand the nature of Islamic radicalism, in the course of which he discovered the blogosphere. Simon began his own blog, which eventually led him to a whole new career: He co-founded the media company Pajamas Media (where I now blog).

Simon is certain that a blacklist against conservatives exists in Hollywood today, but that it is different from the old one in the days of HUAC. Today, he writes, "an almost invisible thought control" exists "where 'liberal' conformity is so pervasive that a formal blacklist is unnecessary." He points to the ritualized "Bush bash" as an example. A studio executive might have a meeting with, say, a writer or director and begin with some chit-chat. It would probably begin with something like, "Did you hear what the idiot said today?" Everyone would know whom "the idiot" referred to. If you differed from this orthodoxy, according to Simon, you had essentially three choices: You could argue and be unemployed; you could ignore it and stay in the closet, "in which case you felt like a coward"; or you "could stop going to the meetings altogether—you could, in effect, blacklist yourself."

This last is what Simon chose to do. It is Hollywood's loss. **NR**

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Film

Boring from Within

ROSS DOUTHAT

THERE are two ways to watch Steven Soderbergh's *Che*. The two-part, 257-minute immersion in the life, times, and military campaigns of Latin America's most iconic Marxist has been released simultaneously in theaters and on your local cable company's pay-per-view, so it can be experienced on the big screen with a single intermission, or at a more leisurely and intermittent pace on your living-room couch. I do not advise seeing this movie under any circumstances, but if see it you must, the couch is decidedly the way to go. You'll be grateful for the pause button, and for the chance to escape at intervals into the kitchen, the out-of-doors, or your local tavern, the better to fortify yourself for the slog ahead.

Despite its running time, *Che* is granular rather than sweeping, confining itself to the nuts and bolts of Ernesto Guevara's two most famous campaigns: the successful overthrow of Batista's government in Cuba and the unsuccessful insurgency that he led, and died for, in mid-1960s Bolivia. There's some other material woven in—a recreation, in black and white, of Che's trip to Manhattan and the U.N. in 1964; and a few scenes with Fidel and his cronies in Mexico in 1956, just before they took ship for Cuba. But large swaths of Guevara's remarkable story (his South American young adulthood, his years in the Cuban government, his African misadventures, his family life and love affairs) are left untouched. This is a tale of two insurrections, and nothing else: As Castro instructed—"within the revolution, everything; outside the revolution, nothing"—so Soderbergh has filmed.

It's an unconventional approach to a biopic, and the results are a reminder of where those conventions come from in the first place. Keeping so much of Che's life offstage denies the audience any real access to his psyche: Benicio Del Toro's impersonation is impressive, but he's all charisma and no personality; he's playing an icon, not a man. This is, of course, how Guevara's partisans remember him, and if you're a member of the cult you may find Soderbergh's movie moving and immersive. (Jean-Paul Sartre, who famously called his fellow Stalinist "the most complete human being of our age," would no doubt be enraptured.) But as psychological portraits go, this one has all the thickness of a Che Guevara T-shirt.

In a sense, the film *Che* most resembles is Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, insofar as its dramatic wallop depends on certain theological assumptions about its hero. But that comparison is far too kind to Soderbergh: Whatever your opinion of the gore, Gibson's *Passion* managed to capture the Gospels' grinding, gripping narrative momentum (they don't call it the Greatest Story Ever Told for nothing), whereas *Che* is plodding, underplotted, and discursive, with the longueurs of a Terrence Malick film but little of Malick's visual poetry. It's boredom punctuated by gunfire—which is probably faithful to the experience of guerrilla warfare but seems like a poor way to design a movie.

A number of reviewers have tried to turn this tedium into a virtue, by saying respectful things about Soderbergh's emphasis on process, his interest in the logistics of revolution—recruitment and training, raids and ambushes, the wooing of the peasantry, and so on. But *Che* is all detail and no context: In the lush jungles of Cuba and the scrubby Bolivian highlands alike, you won't be able to see the forest for the trees. Maps are supplied over the opening credits, showing the provinces of Cuba and the nations of South America, but you'll labor in vain to make sense of Che's campaigns on a strategic as opposed to tactical level. Battle plans are sketched out, promotions are granted and alliances wrangled over, and familiar actors pop up from time to time amid the shrubbery—Lou Diamond Phillips, Franka Potente, and, in a bizarre cameo, Matt Damon. But save for Demián Bichir's vivid, fast-talking Castro, it's awfully hard to tell one bearded, mud-spattered guerrilla from the next, let alone figure out how the various forced marches, surprise attacks, and recruitment drives add up to victory or defeat.

The overall effect is too dull to be morally outrageous. Soderbergh's approach to Che's crimes is evasive, to put it mildly—there's a reference to "executions" in his U.N. speech, and a Cuban exile involved in hunting him down accuses the captured Che of having killed his uncle, but otherwise the movie elides Guevara's post-revolutionary reign of terror the same way it elides so much else about his life. This would be offensive in a better film—as in Walter Salles's *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004), for instance, whose vivid, bustling recreation of the younger Che's South American wanderings felt morally dubious precisely because it made Guevara seem like such a captivating figure without once acknowledging his crimes. But *Che* is too tedious to inspire anything save perplexity, and frequent glances at your watch. The religious anthropologists of the future will probably have a field day with it, but unless you're one of the last believing Marxists, you'll feel as though you're trespassing on the interminable rites of a nearly defunct religion. It's like a four-and-a-half-hour hymn to Zeus. **NR**

Che is all detail and no context: In the lush jungles of Cuba and the scrubby Bolivian highlands alike, you won't be able to see the forest for the trees.

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City Desk

Cellphobjects

RICHARD BROOKHISER

I AM an Old One. Not a dead one: This piece was written on a PC, and flown by e-mail to its journalistic nest. But that is the labor of my hands, which takes place at my desk. When I go outside my room, to sniff the air, to buy paper towels, to have a caipirinha, I go alone. No one can reach me; I can reach no one. My only human contacts are the people before me, that I can see and hear with my unaided senses, address with my natural voice.

Back at my desk, I am part of the web. When I have a question, or an idea, or a bit of gossip, I tap out a pixel message. Or, more rarely, I pick up a telephone, more commonly known as a land line. You remember those: They were connected to each other with wires, miles of them; in the suburbs and the country, the wires were strung along artificial trees called telephone poles (you can see pictures of them in the middle distance of old R. Crumb comics). For the convenience of the public, coin-operated telephones were installed in frames on the sides of buildings, or in full-length freestanding booths. Although the system was barbaric, reception was surprisingly good, audible even; land lines never dropped calls. But those days have passed.

I have passed through the two stages of techno-grief, alarm and anger. Now I am in a third, transcendental stage: wonder. I look at people, some of them my friends, and their portable communication devices, and I ask what has become of us.

These little instruments are ubiquitous. Airplanes are still exempt, and trains have specially labeled and carefully patrolled "Quiet Cars," which plunge one back to the dark ages of 1990. No place else is immune. I chaired a panel at the American Historical Association that was interrupted by the ring of someone's cellphone. I have heard them toodle in concerts. Rudy Giuliani answered a cellphone call from his third wife during a presidential debate. Paris Hilton interrupted her sex tape to take a cellphone call (or so I've heard; I would only watch such a thing for the articles).

You can write on them, talk to them, or take pictures with them. The last use is most interesting to an Old One. Thanks to cell-pix, we have gotten journalistic images—of demonstrators cracked down on, celebs having ego-hernia celeb moments—that we would not otherwise have gotten. The burning of Atlanta in *Gone with the Wind* would still look pretty cheesy on a 2" x 3" screen, but higher quality is only a matter of time. Talking on cellphones and the like is like talking on a telephone—almost. The face-to-face link has been ruptured since Alexander Graham Bell, but now privacy has gone too. You're still not really with your interlocutor, but anyone within earshot is now with your half of the chat. Modern cellphone conversations occur on sidewalks, in restaurants, ten inches from your face in an elevator. Writing on the little screen has suffered the strangest mutilation. Even the carpal thumbed will not tap out an entire Psalm, much less a *Federalist Paper*. So u snd grbg :(

The screens of these devices glow. That may be their most seductive feature. The glow suggests warmth, although the screens are in fact cold. Yet they are certainly bright. In certain light, the shine reflects off the owner's eyes and cheeks, like the Sun off the surface of the Moon. The glow draws you in. In where? Towards the little people on the other end of the invisible filament. Sometimes you see their little faces, sometimes you hear their little voices; sometimes little letters appear on the screen, typed by their little hands. Isn't it small for them in there, in that little box? That's okay, because you can hold them and have them close. It's easier than dealing with big people, and it's better, because they are always with you—and they can always be clicked away.

APPLE INC.

When psychology began to grow beyond the insights of Father Sigmund, one of the directions it took was toward the study of relationships. Freud sometimes wrote as if people were autonomous time bombs, preset to go off in bursts of libido and aggression. The new wave wanted to look more carefully at how we deal, or don't deal, with other people. One concept that appeared was the self object—the important Other who becomes a feature of our inner life. The individuals who become self objects may do all sorts of things: love, lead, command; in perverse relationships, they destroy. But at a primitive level, their presence is essential to us, and keeps us going.

My wife has told me that whenever I talk about George Washington's performing some characteristic act, I tear up. One of her self objects is Glenn Gould, whose intense, weird art she discovered in her sad adolescence: *The Art of Fugue*, her rampart and her only one. Socrates said he had a daimon that gave him direction at crucial moments. The Tony Perkins character in *Psycho* talks to his mom.

All that takes a lot of tedious time and interaction. Now, with cellphones, iPhones, and Blackberries, we have pocket-sized self objects. Children have had such things forever—the favorite toy, the bunny with the missing eye and the face shiny with grease. We're all children now, and the nice geeks on the west coast are happy to supply us with companions. So who is that a-hole in the coffee house, bellowing about his next appointment, or the adenoid girl breezing through the lobby saying where she is and where she will be in two minutes, or the colleague in the meeting tappety-tapping away on the tiny keys (once he would have doodled)? They are all the Star Child at the end of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. They are the future. **NR**

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Happy Warrior

BY MARK STEYN

The Children's Crusade

THE other day I found myself wondering when the conversion rate would become an avalanche. To Islam, I mean. If you've been following recent developments in the Netherlands, you'll know that Geert Wilders, a member of the Dutch parliament, is to be put on trial for offending Muslims. "Look at what you're doing," the sardonic Brit Pat Condell pointed out. "You're prosecuting a man who is under 24-hour protection from attack by violent Muslims. Yet he's the criminal for expressing an opinion."

Quite. But, while Europe has a high degree of tolerance for intolerant imams, it won't tolerate anyone pointing out that intolerance. It is not necessary for Minheer Wilders to be either jailed or forced into exile to conclude that the Netherlands, like many of its neighbors, has already conceded the key point—that Muslims now have the exclusive right to set the parameters of public debate on Islam. And, given that they don't regard it as debatable at all, that means the relentless Islamization of Europe will continue and accelerate while the deWildered political establishment stands mute.

When I talk like that, I'm assumed to be nuts—or, to use the preferred term, "alarmist" (*The Economist* et al.). Brian Barrington, a Dublin blogger, recently concluded a review of my book *America Alone* by asking: "Is Mark Steyn a scaremongering fool indulging in Islamophobic fantasies? . . . Answer: yes he is."

Here's a 2008 headline from *Le Figaro* re demographic trends in Brussels: "*La capitale européenne sera musulmane dans vingt ans*"

For those who haven't taken up President Obama's urgings to learn another language, that's French for "Nothing to see here, folks."

Now here's a 2009 headline from the *Times* of London: "Muslim Population 'Rising 10 Times Faster than Rest of Society'"

A little bit harder for that one to get lost in translation. According to the United Kingdom's Office of National Statistics, the greatest number of "Christians" (whatever that means in a contemporary Anglican context) is to be found among the over-70s, and the largest number of Muslims is in the cohort aged four and under. Which is Britain's past and which Britain's future? No need to ask a "scaremongering fool." In a land where the head of state is also Supreme Governor of the established church, a quarter of all public elementary schools are what are known as "Church of England schools." In practice, they cannot teach Christianity because many of them, especially in the inner cities, are now overwhelmingly Muslim. In two C-of-E schools, every single pupil is Muslim. At others, the retreating Christian community can still muster up to 1 percent of the enrollment. In Bradford, the church is building a new school for what will be an entirely Muslim student body.

"Demographics change," says the Venerable Peter Ballard, Archdeacon of Lancaster. "There was certainly a Christian population there at one time and, who knows, 20 years from now the Christians might be back."

Not in 20 years. According to official statistics, of "white British Christian" households 16 percent have two or more dependent children; among the U.K.'s "Pakistani Muslim" households, the figure is 50 percent; "Bangladeshi Muslims," 58 percent. The British government's "sustainable development chair" (whatever that is), Jonathon Porritt, has just announced that he thinks parents are being "environmentally irresponsible" if they have more than two children.

That 16 percent will listen to the sustainable chair. The 58 percent will fill the void.

So Britain and Europe are becoming more Muslim. The only question is how much more, how fast. And in that respect I think the only thing I got wrong in *America Alone* is that I was insufficiently "alarmist." I'll bet the *capitale européenne sera musulmane* a lot sooner than 20 years from now.

Islam is not a race: As the *Times* reported, "Experts said that the increase was attributable to immigration, a higher birthrate and conversions to Islam." That last category is the next stage. Like many readers, I've been enjoying Robert Ferrigno's *Prayers for the Assassin* trilogy, set in an Islamic Republic of America a decade or three hence, while being just a wee bit skeptical about the premise—that a nuclear catastrophe would prompt millions of Americans to convert to Islam. But in Europe? There's no need for nukes, just the quiet, remorseless daily reality.

In the next few years, Brussels, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Rotterdam will become majority Muslim. Let's say you work in an office in those cities: One day they install a Muslim prayer room, and a few folks head off at the designated time, while the rest of you get on with what passes for work in the EU. A couple of years go by, and it's now a few more folks scooting off to the prayer room. Then it's a majority. And the ones who don't are beginning to feel a bit awkward about being left behind.

What do you do? The future showed up a lot sooner than you thought. If you were a fundamentalist Christian like those wackjob Yanks, signing on to Islam might (*pace* Mr. Ferrigno) cause you some discomfort. But if you're the average post-Christian Eurosecularist, what's the big deal? Who wants to be the last guy sitting in the office sharpening his pencil during morning prayers?

Funny how quickly it all happened. There was the woman on reception, but she retired. And the guy in personnel who used to say, sotto voce, that Geert Wilders had a point. But he emigrated the year after Wilders did. **NR**

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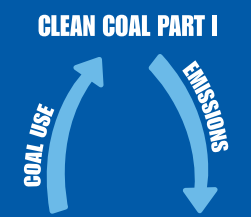

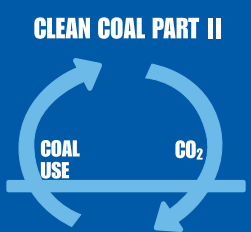

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